

THE *J. B.*
Ministerial Office :

WHEREIN

The Importance, Difficulty, Nature and Necessity of that Office, are considered.

BEING TWO

SERMONS,
ONE

At the ORDINATION of
Mr. B. GRAVENOR ;

THE OTHER

At the ORDINATION of
Mr. S. WRIGHT.

By DANIEL WILLIAMS.

ALSO,
Mr. GRAVENOR's and Mr. WRIGHT's
Confessions of Faith, delivered at their
ORDINATION.

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To my Worthy Brethren
Mr. Gravenor & Mr. Wright.

I Hope these Truths which affected you at your Ordination, will always keep you active and faithful in that Work whereto you are dedicated. The former Sermon I long refused to publish, because I thought to insert it into a larger Treatise. The second contains but Hints of sundry Matters not to be enlarged on in a single Sermon. I pray that both now join'd may serve some good purpose. You are Persons likely to be significant for excellent Service in your Generation, if you continue humble and diligent. We who are going off the Stage, adore the divine Providence, which has raised many such under our Disadvantages; and pray for an Effusion of the Spirit, whereby you may exceed us in Abilities and Success; that you may see the Power of Religion, and the Rights of our Lord Jesus, as Law giver, more extensively obtain.

But tho your Endowments be considerable for your Age, yet allow that your Experience by many Tears will make you wiser; for you'll see things in their Events, Men and Matters in various Aspects, and Confidence so baffled by discover'd Mistakes, that in gray Hairs you'll pity the Self-conceitedness of many young Men.

Your publick Appearance falls out in a time of Liberty, it's a Season for diffusive Good, improve it

with Diligence, as what is loseable; with Caution, as Men much observ'd; with Honesty to Fellow-Labourers, as under Temptations to undermine each other, to your common Hurt; with Prudence, as having great Events depending; and therefore irritate none needlessly, nor be the Tools of any, but being true to the publick Good, mind your own Work; maintain the Truth as it is in Jesus; and approve your selves Men devoted to the Interest of Christ, and subserviently thereto to understand your own.

Over considerable Flocks you are call'd to be Pastors; let none despise your Youth, through a careless, rash, vain, or insolent Behaviour; few will be apt to allow for your Years, but will rather on that account reject what you are capable, and authorized to say and do. Therefore undertake nothing which belongs not to you; assert nothing without good Proof, use Patience in all Cases, which Time will mend: Soon remove Prejudices as far as innocent Self-denial will contribute to it; intermeddle as little as may be in your People's secular Affairs; and if possible never dispute with them about your own; yet be resolute in the plain Concerns of Christ: Suppress Contentions in the beginning, and, except in Cases of very great Importance, never bring your Debates or private Disgusts into the Pulpit. Discountenance Factions, distinguish well-meaning weak Men, from such as aim at Divisions from base or aspiring Ends, or an Enmity to Peace and Moderation. Attempt no Church-Censures, where the Fault is not so great and plain, as to give just Reason for convicting the Offendor, and the Concurrence of the People.

Preaching is a principal part of your Office. Pray for Help in your Preparations, take due time, and prepare

prepare to the utmost of your Abilities, that Matter and Words be adapted to the greatest Benefit of your Hearers; and not to please the Fancie, or serve any carnal turn of your own or others. Reduce all Truths to the practical holy Ends for which they were revealed, urging Arguments, fit to incline the Will as a rational Appetite. Firmly believe, and get your Hearts affected with what you intend to preach; but when you are Preaching, be principally careful, that your Performance be decent, pertinent, and fitted to prevail with others; not refusing what may occur to your Minds, as an Addition to your prepared Matter, if your Skill in Divinity secures you against the Mistakes of sudden Thoughts. When you retire, meditate and pray over your Sermon, as concerned to profit by the the same Truths, and sure to be judged by the same Word, as you applied to others.

Studious Searches after Truth are preparatory to your Performances, and will be your Employ to Old Age, except Pride or Sloth will make you content with superficial Knowledge. In all your Studies remember you are Ministers, therefore propose a greater Fitness for your Work by all designed Acquirements. The Holy Bible is your Rule, and chief of Mines, let that lead and finally determine all your Notions of divine Truths; and to prevent Mistakes, fully examine and compare, before you are confident; explain dark Places by the plainer, and what's seldom or occasionally mentioned, by what's frequently and of set Purpose inculcated. Accurately examine all Metaphorical Expressions, and the Scope of Parables; set some undoubted Truths, as the Bounds within which you confine your Searches, into what's more intricate and disputable: And

in matters discoverable only by inspired Revelation, with a Holy Reverence check bold Enquiries, and keep to the Words of the Holy Spirit.

Deep Searches into Truth will lead you to different Opinions from many others, which ought not to be debated with Violence, Obstinacy, Contempt, or Hatred: For avoiding thereof, Eclipse not the just Worth of any, whose Sentiments you disapprove; impute not the Consequences they disown; let no Prejudice against Men obstruct the Light you might receive; abate not Christian Love where the Error is tolerable; misrepresent not Mens Opinions to serve a Party-turn, which is the vilest Knavery. Be glad to find your Agreement greater than you apprehended; when you mean the same thing, let not Strife about Words be thought a just Pretence for seeming Disagreement; And labour for a distinct Notion of things, that Logomachies may not expose Peace, Truth, and the common Interest of good Men to danger.

I hope a good End may be served if I suggest to you a few Seasonable Distinctions. Distinguish,

1. Between God's Decree of Benefits, and his Promises applied, which invest in a Right to, and give us the Possession of those Benefits.

2. Between the Covenant of Innocency made with Mankind in Adam, as their Root; and the Covenant of Redemption, made with Christ as Mediator; And the Gospel-Covenant, to be offer'd to all for their Consent, and stipulated with Believers.

3. Between Christ's being a mediating Surety by the Covenant of Redemption, in which the honouring of the Law was one Article; And his being a Joint Party with Men in the Covenant of Works, which would make him no Mediator.

4. Be-

4. Between a Redemption by the Death of Christ, that notwithstanding the Care of the Law, renders all Men capable of the offers of Salvation on the Terms of the Gospel; And a Redemption that eventually secures the Elect's Compliance with those Terms, and their future Salvation.

5. Between the impetrating Merit of all saving Blessings, adjusted in the Covenant of Redemption, and performed by Christ alone: And the Qualifications enjoined by the Gospel on such as shall enjoy those Blessings, in the Virtue of Christ's Merits.

6. Between the natural Law, enacting Duties with Promises, adjusted by equitable Justice between God and Men; And a positive Law of Grace, injoyning Duties on fallen Man, with Promises of a Salvation purchased by Christ for Believers, and an Interest therein tendered to all Men upon believing, which Interest is to be now examined by us, and hereafter will be adjudged by Christ according to that Tender, as a Rule of Judgment.

7. Between the General Assent of Faith; And its entire Form with respect to a Mediator, when made the Condition of Justification.

8. Between Gospel-Repentance unto Life as the necessary means of an Apostate's Return to the Holiness he fell from; And its being a Part of that Holiness that he fell from, and turns to.

9. Between an Imputation of Christ's Righteousness; which imports our having done and suffered what he did; And an Imputation of Christ's Righteousness, as a Believer's securing Plea, for Enjoyment of the Blessings purchased by Christ for Believers, and promised to them in the Gospel.

10. Be-

Between a Righteousness meriting Gospel-Blessings; And a Righteousness which is a Compliance with the Gospel-Terms, upon which Salvation thro' Christ is offer'd to Sinners.

I hope you'll accept what a Zeal for your Good, and the Benefit of others, has prevailed with me to attempt in these Advices, that God who has sent you to labour in his Vineyard, would keep you faithful, and enable you to despise all the tempting Advantages, and all the discouraging Reproaches and Sufferings of his present World, from a realizing View of that which is to come; is the hearty Prayer of,

Your Affectionate Brother
and Servant,

Daniel Williams.

ERRATA.

PAGE 15. line 6. for *strait*, read *strict*. p. 25. l. 14. blot out (no). p. 30. l. 27. for *asserted*, read *affected*. p. 44. l. 6. for *your*, read *you'll*. p. 45. l. 2, and 9. for *of the Lord*, read *in the Lord*. p. 77. l. 28. f. four r. five.

THE
Great Importance and Difficulty
 OF THE
 Ministerial-Office.

2 COR. II. 16.

And who is sufficient for these Things?

THE Context shews, that the Apostle, in this Exclamation, refers to the Work of the Gospel-Ministry; for he declares he had opportunity to preach the Gospel; *When I came to Troas to preach Christ's* Ver. 13. *Gospel, and a Door was open'd to me of the Lord.* His Success in this Work he mentions with Thanks to GOD the Author of it; *Now Thanks* Ver. 14. *be to GOD which causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the Savor of his Knowledge by us in every place.* He adds, that his Labours were acceptable to GOD, and not in vain; even to those who profited not thereby, they had effect on them, but very dismal, *For we are unto GOD* Ver. 15, *a sweet Savor of Christ in them that are saved, and* 16.

in them that perish; to the one we are the Savor of Death unto Death, and to the other the Savor of Life unto Life.

Hereupon St. Paul breaks out into this sudden Exclamation, *Who is sufficient for these Things?* His serious Mind is struck with the Greatness of a Work, upon which such awful Events depended; and it cannot be otherwise with any, who know and believe these things, as he did. But it is to be bewailed, that many undertake the Ministerial Office, with a Mind so light and carnal, as discovers such Unacquaintedness with its Duties, and a Contempt of its Effects, as if they were disbelieved; and knowing that as this prevails, the aptness of our Labours to the benefit of Souls will be obstructed, I shall endeavour to raise in you more solemn thoughts of this sacred Office, which will be a Motive to Diligence in Preparations for your Work, and direct you in a faithful discharge of it to saving Purposes.

Who is sufficient, τίς ικανός; the Word notes sometimes,

Mat. 3. 11. 1. *Worthiness*: *Whose Shoes I am not worthy to bear.*

2. Sometimes *Meetness* or *Fitness*: Our Translators take it in this sense, *q. d.* Who has Skill and Strength proportionable? Who has a Mind and Temper suitable to so high and hard a Work? Is there any Man *par negotio*? The Apostle therefore here expresseth,

1. A humble Sense of Mens Unworthiness of so great a Dignity as the Ministerial Office, especially to be successful in it; *q. d.* "How strange is it that such an Honour should be put on any

“ any of the sinful Race of Mankind, as to stand
 “ so near to GOD, and be a joint Worker with
 “ Him in saving Souls? The Employ is so high
 “ and honourable as becomes the highest Angel:
 “ What an unexpected Favour then is it, that
 “ defiled Clay should be exercised therein! Can
 “ Flesh be worthy to represent GOD, and
 “ transact with the World in his Name about
 “ Matters so Spiritual and Divine, and of such
 “ Consequence both to Christ and Mankind?
 St. Paul utters his own Apprehension of this as
 to himself, *To me, who am less than the least of all* Eph. 3. 8.
Saints, is this Grace given, that I should preach the
unsearchable Riches of Christ. He esteem'd it an
 unmerited Favour; and if we have not such low
 Thoughts of our selves, we shall not duly pray
 for GOD's Assistance, or on good grounds ex-
 pect his Blessing.

2. An awful Apprehension of the great Diffi-
 culty and Consequence of the Work of the Mini-
 stry, as what few are fit for; *q. d.* “ Who is
 “ able and furnished for that which is so sa-
 “ cred, so hard, so heavy, and upon which
 “ more than a World depends?

But these two Heads may be reduced to one;
 because an approved fitness for the Work is
 a Gospel-Worthiness of the Office; and there-
 fore the Sum is, What Man has not reason hum-
 bly to confess, he wants this Meetness, which in
 Gospel-Acceptation is a Worthiness of this Of-
 fice?

I. I shall in three Propositions endeavour the
 Explication of this Subject.

II. I shall shew the just grounds for this Exclamation.

I. For Explication. *Prop. 1.* The Words are applicable to the Ministerial Office in the hands of *Presbyters*. 2. The Text does not imply, that *no Ministers* are in some approved degree fit for this Work, and so far worthy in God's Acceptation. 3. A *serious affecting Conviction* of the Dignity and Difficulty of the Work of the Ministry is of great use to Ministers, and a good sign where it prevails.

Prop. 1. The Words are applicable to the Ministerial Office in the hands of *Presbyters*. The Apostle speaks not of what was peculiar to the *Apostolical* Office, but what's common to ordinary Presbyters, its preaching the Gospel with its Effects and Adjuncts that he mentions; now Preaching the Gospel belongs to a Presbyter, as part of his Work and Trust: He is to labour in the Word and Doctrine; he is to feed the Flock; and the Labours of such will turn to the joyful or grievous Account of those who hear them.

1 Tim. 5.
17.
1 Pet. 5.2.
Heb. 13.
16.

Prop. 2. The Text implies not, that *no Ministers* are in some approved Degree fit for this Work, and so far worthy in divine Acceptation. *Many* are branded as altogether unfit, but not *all*: It's *marvelous* that any are tolerably fit, but not *impossible*; and yet it's true, that the best accomplish'd has reason to be conscious of many Defects in his Attainments and Performances. Such things indeed may be truly infer'd

fer'd from the extensive Aspect of the Words ; But he intends not to condemn every Minister as wholly insufficient.

This Head I'll explain, to prevent Mistakes.

1. The Fitness for this Work respecteth both the Essential *Qualifications*, which Christ appoints as necessary ; and the faithful exerting those Qualifications in the discharge of this Office. *Commit these to faithful Men, able to teach others.* ^{2 Tim. 2.} Ability and Faithfulness are Requisites. The former you find oft mentioned, as *Tit. 1. 6*, to *ver. 10.* *1 Tim. 3. 2*, to *ver. 7*. You may also infer from the nature of their Work, and the Titles given to Ministers, what Qualifications are indispensibly required ; there cannot be a real Performance of their Work, if they be *unqualified altogether* ; on the other hand, the Person may be qualified, and yet be very unfit, by *not employing* his Abilities according to his Place. ^{2.}

The Holy Spirit hath set down Rules for our Exercise and Behaviour, as well as for Abilities ; you'll meet these in the fore-mentioned places, and in many other Scriptures, as *Acts 20, 28, 31*. You may further infer them from the recorded Reproofs and Threats against the faulty *Priests* ^{Rev. 2. 13.} and *Prophets*, as also against the *Angels* of the Churches, *Diotrephes* and others : It's probable that some great neglect herein was charged on *Archippus* ; *Say to Archippus, Take heed to the* ^{Col. 4. 17.} *Ministry thou hast received of the Lord, that thou fulfil it.*

2. But you must allow a difference between such a defect in Abilities as *incapacitates* for the Office, and what only renders one *less fit*,

as compared with Persons of greater Eminency. There are different Degrees of the same kind of Gifts among Men justly admitted to be Preachers, and it's hard to determine, what is the *lowest* Degree which makes one capable of this Function; especially in *extraordinary* Seasons and Cases. Great Caution becomes us in determining this, for it's dangerous to nullify the Administrations of *weaker* Men in Places and Times of Ignorance; and not safe to enlarge the Limits in Times and Places of greater Light, and where Persons of more adequate Endowments may be found in a sufficient Number. Yet I think I may safely affirm, No Man should be received as a Minister, nor will Christ allow him to be such, unless he has *Gifts* which fit him to perform all the essential Parts of his Office to spiritual Edification, without exposing the People to *damning* Errors, or the Office to the just Contempt of those, among whom he ordinarily labours.

3. There may be such Abuses and Neglects in the *Execution* of the Office, as do render Men of sufficient Gifts, so altogether unacceptable to God, as to be rejected by him.

It's thus, when by their Errors or scandalous Enormities they do *more* hurt than good. As also, when their Labours are generally directed to an End opposite to the Interest of Christ, and Benefit of Souls, or managed with no tendency to these. Gross and stated Neglects are also high Provocations; such be called *dumb Dogs*, and *greedy Dogs* too, which commonly meet in the same Men. The Abilities of such Persons

Persons are their Snare, and will aggravate their Condemnation: To them God saith, *Be- cause thou hast rejected Knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt not be a Priest unto me. They eat up the Sin of my People, and they set their Heart on their Iniquity; and there shall be like People like Priest, and I will punish them for their ways.* The Condition of a People under such a Minister is deplorable; they have little or no hope to profit, they are in great danger to be corrupted, offended, and grow worse and worse; for he wants Divine Assistance in his Preparations, he is so far from a Blessing on his Performances, that God has declared he will make them contemptible and unuseful.

Yet as fatal as such Ministers are to the Church, they are too common in every Age; many are thus unfit as to Abilities, Abuse, and gross Neglects. Nor can it be easily prevented, where Men are admitted into the Office upon slighty Trials, or Ministers are accountable to none, or else to such only who are regardless how the Office is managed, or unfit to judge.

4. Nevertheless the Words do not import, that *all* Men employ'd in this Office are *utterly* incapable of being qualified, and faithful in it.

Tho they signify, that a Fitness in both these respects is *difficult*, and oft so rare, that *few* among them who assume the Office, are qualified, and manage their Work in a tolerable degree; yea and the best need Assistance from above, and pardon of many Neglects; yet we may be sure, that all Ministers are not necessarily insuffi-

cient. If this were the intent of the Text, it must reflect on the *Wisdom*, or *Goodness*, or *Power* of Christ. On his *Wisdom*; for if he shou'd appoint Men to a stated Office, for which no Man cou'd be fitted, his End in that Appointment wou'd be always frustrated by his Choice of unfit *Means*; or it must reflect on his *Goodness*, to call Men to a Work of so great Concernment to the Weal of other Souls, with a Charge importing such Danger or Benefit to themselves; and yet not one possible to be qualified for this Office.

Or if his *Wisdom* and *Good Will* be vindicated, the Reflection wou'd fall upon his *Power*, as if he were not able to give to any Men those necessary Endowments, and excite them to the faithful Use of those Abilities.

But blessed be his Name, he is most wise, perfectly good, and Almighty; and therefore *some* shall be found sufficient for these things: He takes such care about it, that Instances thereof have been found in the Church from

2 Cor. 3. age to age. Many had cause to say, *He has made*
6.—4. 5. *us able Ministers of the New Testament*; *ἡμεῖς*

Eph. 6.
21.

Christ made them to be sufficient and worthy; the Interrogation in my Text is, Who is sufficient; they cou'd answer, We are *sufficient*, tho it is of *G O D* and not of *our selves*. *Tichicus* was a faithful Minister in the Lord, such hath the Church been blessed with in many Places, Men accepted with *G O D*, as their Success and his Care for them have witnessed. Therefore despair not, but apply your selves to become such *Vessels of Honour*, meet for our Master's use.

Prop.

Prop. 3. A serious affecting Conviction of the Dignity and Difficulty of the Work of the Ministry is of *great use* to Ministers, and a *good Sign* where it's found. I mean not an *over-whelming* Sense, which may affright the Qualified from this Office; or what may dis-spirit or torment the Faithful in the exercise of it; there's no ground for that: But the thing I aim at, is such a Sense as may check a vain, slothful, careless and proud Mind; and engage all the Powers of the Soul (with a constant Dependance on Christ) in all that belongs to this Sacred Employment.

1. *It is of great use* to Ministers to have their Thoughts thus possessed; for if you are duly sensible of the greatness of this Employ, it will excite *you* to *prepare* for the Work, and to be still improving in all Gifts and Graces, which are necessary to the right Discharge of it; it's a matter too sacred to be trifled with; you'll not think what *cost* *you* *nothing* to be sufficient. These right Apprehensions will put you to study to shew your selves approved unto GOD, *Workmen that need not to be ashamed.* You must ^{2 Tim. 2.} be ashamed, if the most awful Business is managed *negligently*; and if in what you reckon of most Importance, your Souls are inconstant, remiss and disengaged. GOD and your own Consciences will put you to the *Blush* at the remembrance of this Office, when you discharge it without a holy Care to *make full Proof* of it. ^{2 Tim.}

Just Thoughts will cause *earnest Supplications* ^{5.} for Divine Aid, in a matter so much above your own Strength. You'll be forc'd to be oft at

at the Throne of Grace for Wisdom, Zeal and Faithfulness, that the Blood of Souls may not be laid to your Charge, nor any come short of Salvation by your Default; yea you'll see the *Prayers of others* needful. These the Apostle desired.

1 Theff. 5.
23.

This affecting Sense will put you in all Humility to fix your *entire Dependance* on Christ for Conduct, Assistance and Success. On him the stress of your Hope will lie, and as you'll have no Confidence in Self, so you'll ascribe to him the Glory of all right Performances, and their good Effects. *I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the Grace of God which was with me.* What intent *Reviews* and *Enquiries* will this command as to your Attainments, Labours, and Behaviour; you'll oft ask, Am I as well furnish'd as I might have been if diligent? Could not I have preach'd more profitably than I have done? Might not I have better improved such a seasonable Opportunity to reclaim or improve such a Soul?

1 Cor. 15.
10.

This will beget great *Solicitousness* about the *Success* of our Ministry. Eternity is concern'd in what I am about, How shall I accommodate my Work as it may best tend to save perishing Souls? For what Success I had, I am thankful, and rejoice in every Convert as *my Crown and Joy*.

1 Theff. 2.
19.

But I grieve over the Impenitent as miserable; Oh my Soul, is nothing owing to my Defect? Is there any thing in my Temper or Behaviour that hardned these Hearts, or hindred their Benefit? Any thing I can remove? Or is there any thing I can further do for the Welfare of these Souls hereafter?

It

It will also secure you against *needless* Diversions, and Waste of Time. Can I have nothing to do, when my Time is short, my Business of such Concern, my Life so uncertain as well as short; so many need my Help, and my Account so strait?

It will be a good *Preservative* against Sin, as what forfeits the Influences of the Holy Spirit, upon which your Fitness, and the Success of the aptest Labours depend: For if by wilful Sins you *grieve* and *quench* the Holy Spirit, your Study and Labours are unlikely to serve the great Purposes of your Office; yea how dark, straitned, weak, faint and dead will you find your own Spirits in the most solemn Ordinances.

A Mind impressed by the greatness of this Office, cannot forbear to excite in it self such Thoughts and Purposes; all which tend to a Minister's Benefit, as they awaken him to avoid Impediments, and to endeavour such a Frame of Spirit, and such a Management of himself and Labours, as aptly conduce, and are ordinarily blessed to the *Saving Ends* of this Institution.

It was from this deep Sense of the Dignity and Greatness of Ministerial Work, expressed in the Text, that our *Apostle* was so industrious, unwearied, zealous, resolved and faithful in the Ministry. Had we those clear and believing Apprehensions of GOD, and Christ, and Eternity, and the Worth of Souls, as he had, we should be more affected; and thereby come to resemble him more in the Application of our selves to the Duties of this Office?

I might add, that a just Sense of this Work would render Ordainers more cautious and impartial in the admission of others into this Office; the Apostle's Caution is too oft forgot, *Doing nothing by Partiality, Lay hands suddenly on no Man.* Careless Ordinations argue contemptuous Thoughts of the Ministry.

1 Tim. 5.
21, 22.

2. This affecting Sense of the Greatness of this Work is a good Sign; it's a Sign that we have high Thoughts of God, who appointed this Office: For its Regard to him, which is express'd in valuing his Interest, obeying his Authority, revering his Institutions, trusting his Promises, and fearing his Judgment-bar.

It also argues a firm Belief of the matters about which we are concerned. Were we doubtful of the Truth of unseen things, an Office exercised altogether about them wou'd be slighted. But when it greatly concerns us as a Subject of the highest moment, we discover a full Perswasion of the Truth of the Gospel we preach; we believe and therefore speak concernedly of the Matters of Salvation. GOD and Christ, the Immortality of the Soul, the Resurrection, the Day of Judgment, Heaven and Hell, must be esteem'd Realities by that Man, who is very solicitous to acquit himself a faithful Minister, and jealous of his Insufficiency. *Knowing the Terrors of the Lord we perswade Men.* It discovers a humble serious Mind, a Mind at least free from that Pride and Levity, which are common Impediments of Mens usefulness; and must be so, not only as they indispose us for Divine Assistance, but as they hinder our Diligence to improve, debase our

2 Cor. 4.
13.

2 Cor. 5.
11.

our Performances, and render them unacceptable to Men, and less apt to benefit them.

Again, It's a sign that *secular Advantages* are not highest in our Aims, or the Springs of our undertaking this Office, and our Labours therein; for such *mean* things can little influence a Heart awed by the Sacredness of his Charge.

This is also a good Prognostick of the *Fruitfulness* of our Labours, and that GOD intends to use us for his Glory in this blessed Work; for it discovers a great aptitude in our Temper for due Management of our Labours, and a hopeful Prospect of GOD's making them effectual. This will appear, if we consider,

A Heart thus affected is a very *tender* Heart, and not under the power of that Deadness, which is caused by Profaneness and Sloth; it's an evidence that we *stand in GOD's Secret*, and converse much with Him, and with our selves.

It argues a readiness to know our Defects, to improve our Helps, to be fervent in Prayer, to receive the Spirit's Influence, to be watchful against Impediments, and to render to GOD the Glory of all Success; yea, and of all due Preparations and Performances.

A Person of this Frame is *prepared* for Service; GOD lays a Foundation by such a Temper, for those eminent Labours and Success which generally ensue.

Finally, This is so great a sign of all these things, and as such desirable, that if you are not thus affected by your Office, it will be (as I shall hereafter prove) a Snare, and is a plain token of the contraries of what I have mention'd, any one

one of which may terrifie every considerate Mind.

I shall proceed to the second general Head.

II. *The Grounds of this Exclamation.*

These I shall urge as Motives, to get our Hearts humbly and seriously affected with the Dignity and Difficulty of our Work, as Ministers. When we hear such an eminent Apostle thus venting himself, our Hearts should much more be filled with an *humble* Fear and Solicitousness, because we are so many degrees *inferior* to him in Abilities and Faithfulness.

I confess, as far as his extraordinary Call to the Ministry, with the Miracles attesting it, and his amazing Success therein, drew out his Soul in wonder, we have not the same reason, because our Call is ordinary, and we have fewer Seals to our Ministry: But yet when he cries, *Who is sufficient for these things?* we may in some respects much more do so, *viz.* as they express a sense of *Unworthiness* as well as Insufficiency: For our Consciences may inform us of those *Offences*, as may cause us to wonder GOD has bestow'd and continu'd the Gifts and Abilities which we possess. We have cause of humble Acknowledgments, that he who foresaw our Neglects should not *reject* us when we enter'd into this Office. What a wonder is it, that such poor Labours should be *blest* to any Souls, and we continued in this Office so long to the benefit of any! We have more reason to admire at our *lesser* Success, than *Paul* had as to greater, considering

sidering how much *less* our Heart is in our Work than his was; how much *less* diligent and abundant in Labours; how a far *less* Zeal for GOD and Love to Souls inspire us than him; how much *less* exemplary in Walk, and stedfast in Trials we are than this Apostle: On such Accounts we have cause to acknowledge our greater Unfitness of such an Office.

But I presently design to treat of the *Greatness* and *Difficulty* of a Minister's Work, as what may affect us with a sense of the Insufficiency of most Preachers, yea of *any*, without Diligence and Divine Assistances. This is the chief Reason why the Apostle cries, *Who is sufficient?* The Dueness and Justice hereof will be evident, if you consider:

I. What a GOD he is whom we personate, and stand so near to.

We are the Mouths by which he speaks to Men, and who is fit to *speak as his Oracle*? Yet this is GOD's Injunction, *If any Man speak, let him speak as the Oracles of GOD*. What Plainness and Authority, what Truth and Gravity becomes them who are his *Ambassadors*, who deliver his Message as representing him? Yet GOD by us *beseecheth Men*, we pray Men in *Christ's stead to be reconciled to GOD*. How should we tremble least we say in his Name, what is unworthy of Him, or in a manner that becomes not our glorious Lord, who now speaketh from Heaven by his Ministers, when they declare his real Will?

Again, It is by us he *sealeth Covenant-Benefits*, and applieth his Blessings. We are also the

1 Pet. 4.

11.

2 Cor. 5.

20.

Heb. 12.

25.

the Peoples Mouth to GOD; we offer their publick Petitions and Praises to Him; we are to
 Joel 2. 17. intercede for them, and as *the Ministers of the Lord to weep between the Porch and the Altar, and say, Spare thy People, O Lord.* Ought we not to cry out, who is a Person sufficiently serious, wise, fervent, pure in Heart, and strong in Faith, to lay Hand on GOD, and trade with Him for Men; a GOD who sees our Hearts, our Aims, our Distractions, and the fervor of our Desires? A *holy* GOD, who cannot but hate all Hypocrisie, Impurity, Pride, Levity and Carnality: A GOD of such Glory, Wisdom, Authority and Power, our Thoughts of Him must be debasing and dishonourable, or our Concernedness with Him will deeply affect us.

2. The *Purposes we serve* are High and GOD-like.

These may be collected from the Ends for which this Office was instituted, the Commission granted, and the Directions given us with respect to our Duty in effecting those Purposes. The Designs we are to persue are to destroy *Satan's* Kingdom, which is variously supported; to build up the Kingdom of our *Redeemer*, which is so spiritual, and yet much opposed; to discipline Apostates to our Lord, by enlightning a blind World, and begetting Souls to Christ; to perfect Saints, and edify the Body of Christ by Doctrine and Discipline, that they may walk worthy of Christ here, and be meet for the heavenly Glory. But more of this hereafter. Who is fit to subserve such great Designs? Designs worthy of that infinite Wisdom, which adjusted them,

Mat. 28.

19, 20.

1 Cor. 4.

15.

Eph. 4.

11, 12.

them, and wherein his Honour is so engaged. What Acquaintance with GOD, what Application of Mind, what Skill, what Courage must he have? Who is fit to be a *Worker together with GOD* in effecting such glorious Purposes? *2 Cor. 6. 1.*

3. The Nature of our Work.

This is spiritual, hard and various. We have several Titles, and each has its peculiar Qualification: As *Pastors*, we need Tenderness and Care: As *Teachers*, we need Knowledge, Patience and Faithfulness: As *Soldiers*, we need Courage, Strength, Vigour and Resolution: As *Watchmen*, we need Vigilance and Fidelity: As *Rulers*, we need Prudence, Impartiality, Diligence, Exemplariness and Fortitude: As *Stewards*, Observance of our Lord, Faithfulness and Circumspection.

The Work allotted us is to be most with GOD, and Souls; it's about what's mysterious and supernatural; it's of vast compass and great variety. We are to explain the Doctrines of Christ, many whereof are sublime and intricate. We are to discover the Spirituality and Extent of GOD's Precepts, and *deliver the whole Counsel of GOD*. We must *exhort and rebuke with all Authority*; we must intreat and plead with the greatest Aptness to perswade; it's incumbent on us to defend the Truth, *convince Gainsayers*, contend for the Faith, reclaim such as transgress, detect false Hopes, reduce the Wanderer, restore Backsliders, awaken the Secure, comfort the Mourner, support the Feeble, and edify the Saints in Faith, Holiness and Joy.

GOD requires of us to administer Sacra-
 ments to Edification, with a distinction between
 the *fit* and such as ought to be debar'd: To ex-
 ercise Discipline, and take care of a Succession
 of Ministers. Our Work extends to satisfie
 Doubts, resolve Cases of Conscience, direct
 Mens Conversation, and warn them of approach-
 ing Judgments.

How hard is it to be fit for any part of this
 Work? How much harder to be suited to *all* of
 it, and diligent therein? What rich Furniture
 is necessary, what Skill, what Zeal, what Affe-
 ction, what Application of Mind! Had we ma-
 ny Bodies and Souls more enlarged, here's busi-
 ness for all.

4. The great things depending on our Success or
 Unsuccessfulness.

Things are estimated by what depends on
 them; in that respect the Ministerial Office is
 the greatest: for they are not mean and momen-
 tary things, but the most momentous and eter-
 nal Concernments, wherein this more directly
 terminates.

1. Theff. i. 9, 10. If our Labours succeed, the true **GOD** is known,
 his Revelations believed, his Laws observed, his
 Name spiritually worshipp'd, his saving Purpo-
 ses accomplish'd, his Soul delighted, all Glory
 and Praise ascribed to Him, and his Grace ad-
 mired. Upon our Success, the Lord Jesus, as
 Mediator, is glorified by Mens Faith, Love and
 Obedience. His Kingdom and Body is enlarged
 on the Ruins of Satan's Kingdom; his Institu-
 tions attended; his blessed Undertaking pro-
 spers by destroying the Works of the Devil, restor-
 ing

ring the Divine Image, and bringing back revolted Man to GOD.

As far as our Endeavours are effectual, *degenerate Men* become wise and holy; they are made useful Blessings to each other, Peace and Order are maintain'd among them, a true Harmony restored in the Creation, the End of their Creation answer'd in the due Furniture and Use of their natural Powers; they are brought to rest on their true Center, supremely loving the chief Good, serving their Maker, Lord and Owner, living to Him, who is our ultimate End; deriving their Happiness from GOD, who is the only Fountain of all true Blessedness. They are made really Blessed now by Union with Christ, Adoption, the Indwelling of the Spirit, and an Interest in all those Promises, which at present invest them in a right to Justification, Peace and Communion with God, Supplies of Grace, Answers of Prayer, a sanctified Use of all Things, and the Comforts of the Holy Ghost.

They will be also made perfectly Blessed for ever, not only by Deliverance from the Wrath to come, and all present Grievances; but they shall be made perfect in all Holiness, and happy to the utmost Capacity of their enlarged Faculties; for they shall be ever with the Lord, they shall see and be like Him in their glorified Bodies and improved Minds; and made as happy in Delight, Satisfaction, Honour and Power, as can be now conceived from those *Rivers of Pleasure*, *Crowns of Glory*, Likeness to Angels, the Joy of the Lord, Dominion over the Wicked, Rulets of Cities, joint Heirship with Christ, and

sitting with Him on his Throne; all which are promised to them. Yea, they shall be happy far above what can now enter into the Heart of Man to conceive.

May not this short View of the Fruit of your Success force you to cry out, *Who is sufficient to manage rightly a Work attended with such blessed Issues?*

2. *If our Labours prove unsuccessful, it's the Reverse of all this, and more.*

Phil. 3.
16, 19.

The *Almighty* is vilified, by Mens accounting the Devil and their *Bellies* fitter to be *Gods* than He, and the vain World a greater Good and Portion. They who disobey the Gospel we preach, continue to justify their Apostacy from GOD, and Malignity against Him, chusing to defie his Anger rather than return and be at Peace.

Heb. 10.
29.

They tread the *Redeemer's Blood under their Feet, as a common, yea, a profane thing*, and chuse to be damned rather than be saved by his Merits.

Luke 19.
14.

When He claims Dominion, they answer, *This Fellow shall not reign over them*; and all his Blessings they refuse, as less needful than what they can obtain by rejecting Him. They'll willingly espouse and serve the Devil's Cause, and fight on his side, rather than become Subjects of Christ's Kingdom.

Acts 7.51.

If we cannot prevail with Men, they will go on *resisting the Spirit, obeying their Lusts, corrupting others, debasing and destroying themselves*. Sin reigns, and the *Wrath of GOD abideth on them*. This sinful and wretched State of many, who partake of our Labours, is deplorable;

John 3.
36.

Who are *in the Wrath of GOD, and will not come to the Son, who is the Life of the World*. This is the state of many who partake of our Labours, is deplorable;

ble ; but there is a farther Argument to affect us, and make us importunate to *pluck them as Brands out of the Burning*, viz. that our Ministry oft becomes an *occasion* of their being more vile, and more miserable. The Remedy proves their Poison ; they wax worse and worse, more harden'd against GOD's Call, and feared under Guilt : Natural Light has less Power to restrain them, when they remain obstinate against the Gospel.

Hence it is, that in our Day, by the just Judgment of GOD, many, who despise Christianity, are more *Atheists* by Principle, than was ever known among Heathen Nations ; the Lord, our Saviour, becomes to these a *Stone of Stumbling*, ^{1 Pet. 2.} and a *Rock of Offence* ; *They stumble at the Word*. ^{8.} And as their Iniquity abounds, they become obnoxious to the *sover* Punishments threaten'd in the Gospel. *They are nigh to cursing, and their* ^{Heb. 6. 8.} *End is to be burned*. Their case, by their obstinacy against the Light of the Gospel, and the Power attending it, renders *Sodom's* condition ^{Mat. 10.} *more tolerable* than theirs ; for such is ^{15.} *reserved the Blackness* of Darkness *for ever*, ^{Jude 13.} *Divine Wrath* and their own Reflections on wilfully abused Hopes, and Helps for Salvation, will aggravate their Misery.

Who has suitable Love and Pity towards Sinners in such Danger ? Who of us sufficiently know the *Terrors* of the Lord, so as duly to persuade Men to flee from such Wrath ? Who of us is fit to say, and do, and be, what may best prevent such woful Consequences of our Ministry to the Barren, and promote their obtaining the

the former Blessings by profiting under our Labours? This is the Consideration which more immediately affects the *Apostle*, and extorts these Words in my Text, *For we are to them that perish a Saviour of Death unto Death, and in them that are saved a Saviour of Life unto Life*: q. d. "Some
 " Men are saved under our Ministry, others per-
 " rish under our Ministry, according as they
 " profit, or neglect to profit: They who pro-
 " fit, proceed from one degree of spiritual Life
 " to another; and thereby to eternal Life, yea,
 " to higher Measures thereof, as a spiritual
 " Life does prosper. But they who are not
 " profited, do by our Labours grow more Aliens
 " from the Life of God, and more under the
 " power of deadly Lusts, and thereby their
 " eternal Misery is surer and severer. How justly
 " does this View of Matters cause Him to add,
 " *Who is sufficient for these Things?* Who is fitted
 " to deal with Men about Matters of such high
 " and eternal moment as these be? Who that
 " has not seen the Glory of Heaven, and the
 " Terrors of Hell, can be prepared in a due
 " manner to treat with Sinners about the Way
 " of Salvation? Yet this is our business in every Sermon we preach.

5. The present *Condition of the Men* with whom we are employed.

They have immortal Souls of different Tempers and Capacities. If they are *unconverted*, we cry to the *Dead*, and labour with the blind enslaved Followers of Satan, who are subject to his Power and Delusions: We plead with the Obstinate and Prejudiced, whose Lusts and carnal

nal Interests are against us. We *call* them to what they are most averse, and abhor as hateful. We *disswade* them from what they are violently inclined to by Constitution and carnal Delight, and fixed in by Custom. Yea, the things we dehort them from, are such as visible things do favour, which many solícite them to, and the generality of Men approve.

We urge them with Offers of Blessings which they *believe not*, because invisible; *relish not*, because they are spiritual and heavenly; and are less impressible by, because these are future and remote: Yea, they *despise* them as mean and needful. What a Miracle is the Conversion of *Acts 13* any? How must our Insufficiency cause Despair of any Success, if a greater Power did not assist?

If our People are *converted*, I grant we have a better Prospect: But even they are so *imperfect* as to minister to the Difficulty of our Work. How many of them are ignorant, weak, selfish, peevish, inconstant, conceited, soon offended, and easily prejudiced? Hence we find it hard not to be mistaken by their Captiousness, diverted by their Impertinences, distressed by their Turbulency, grieved by their Scandals, disturbed by their Quarrels: Nor are their *itching Ears*, and the Errors to which they are subject, easily obviated by the wisest Minister.

May not this add somewhat that may compel us to say, *Who is sufficient for these Things? Who has Prudence* to accommodate himself, and direct his Labours to Persons whose Cases are so contrary, and Attainments and Tempers so va-

rious? Who has *Methods* to insinuate into Hearts so differently affected? Who has Courage so temper'd with Meekness, that neither shall fail when it's necessary to be shewn; and Authority not be prostituted where neither Pride nor Impatience prevail? Who is able to be true to Christ and his Conscience, and yet *become all things to all Men*?

1 Cor. 9.
22.

6. The *Opposition and Discouragements* which attend the *faithful Discharge* of our Duty.

Satan is active by Temptations to divert and discourage us, he oft suggests what may pervert our Minds and mislead us in our Work. He is diligent with others to raise Prejudices, Slanders and Persecution. We shall find *him hindring* Opportunities of Service, and doing his utmost to blast our Endeavours. The *Wicked* are sure to oppose us in every great Attempt for our Lord's Interest, and to incapacitate us for it. If Allurements, Terrors or Reproach will avail, we are sure to be tried: For the Office, and the Ministers for the sake of it, are the Butt against which *Satan* by these Instruments levels his sharpest Darts; well knowing, here are laid the strongest Batteries against his Kingdom; and therefore the most faithful are sure to be most assaulted.

1 Thess. 2.
18.
1 Pet. 5.
13.

How oft do Discouragements proceed from *good Men*, who shou'd assist us? Yea from *Fellow Labourers*, as if they pursued not the same common End, or cou'd retain their own Credit when the Office is in disgrace. The Envy, Underminings, Whispers and Emulation of such do oft prevent Mens usefulness. Nor is it unusual for

for him who suffers in Christ's Cause to be for- 2 Tim. 4.
saken by his Brethren. 16.

May not we say, who is able to fight against Eph. 6.
Principalities and Powers? What can weak Crea- 12.
tures do against such a Torrent? Who has Vi-
gour and Patience, who is stedfast and hardy
enough to bear up against such a world
of Difficulties, and encounter what the reign-
ing Lusts of bad Men, and the remains of Sin
in the Good will put us to? If Slanders or Pri-
sons are Discouragements, if Contempt or Po-
verty, if Unkindness or being forsaken by them Gal. 4. 15,
who once profited by your Labours, and would have 16.
pluck'd out their Eyes for you: If no factious Op-
position and Schismatical Attempts of the se-
duced, whom you once gloried in as Converts,
can dishearten? Many such are the perplexing
Exercises which you must over-come, must not
we say, who has sufficient Patience? Who has
Fortitude of Mind to grapple with such Diffi-
culties? Shoulders broad enough to bear such
Burthens, and not faint? Who hath Skill
enough to countermine Satan, and prevent the
ill Effects of such dangerous Trials?

7. *Our own Indispositions* make our Work the
harder.

We are but Men, and *subject to like Passions*, James 5.
and attended with the same Lusts and Weak- 17.
nesses as other Men, and have more Occasions Acts 14.
to excite and discover our Infirmities and Cor- 15.
ruptions to the Damage of our Ministry. *Sloth*
will abate our Diligence, our *Pride* is apt to
prostitute our Labours to Ostentation, make
us disdain Service to the Poor, and from con-
de-

descending to the Weak. This Pride is apt to aspire at Stations and Business for which we are unfit; this puts us on making Parties for carnal Ends, this tempts to Discontentment under moderate Encouragements, yea and embitters and greatens all our Trials, especially Contempt and Reproach.

Covetousness is apt to muzzle our Mouths, when the Rich need Reproof; if they be offended at our dealing faithfully, it will tempt us to palliate matters; this corrupts our Aims, which provokes the Spirit to blast our Labours; and it oft hinders the Peoples benefiting by them, who are guilty of self-seeking. *Passion* blinds our Judgment, hinders that Meekness and Forbearance which is needful to reach our end; gives an Edg to Provocation, and abates the Success of our Reproofs, Arguings and Advice.

Pusillanimity adds weight to every light Discouragement, affrights from the most necessary Duties when attended with danger; and oft locks up excellent Gifts in Unusefulness, by a Meanness of Spirit.

2 Cor. 4.
2.

Every Lust abates true Spiritual Zeal, divides our Hearts, enervates our Labours, obstructs Divine Assistance, and endangers our falling into such scandalous Sins, as prejudice Men against our Endeavours to do them good.

2 Cor. 4.
7.

I might add, that *bodily Indispositions* are frequently a hindrance. This *Treasure is in Earthen Vessels*. Our bodily Infirmities oft take us off from our Studies, and publick Labours too: They oftner unfit for both, clouding the

the Head, dispiriting the Heart and making us lumpish, unaffected, unduly affected and unactive; some of these make us peevish and fretful, which sometimes gives a rigid and severe Tincture to Mens *Opinions*, as well as a sanguine placid Temper may betray some to the other Extreme, which shou'd make us jealous of the Influence of the bodily Constitution upon the Mind, and thankful for Bodies fitted for the Souls use, especially in what concerns the Imagination.

Moreover the *Cares of a Family* cause Distractions in Mens Thoughts, Poverty sinks the Spirits of many, which with a Solicitude of Mind render them less prepared for their Employ, and less attentive to it: Not to mention that Poverty, Distempers, Reproaches, and the Deforinities of some discourage them, from an Apprehension that they are contemptible in the Esteem of their People, and thereby less capable of Usefulness. *Such Thorns in the Flesh* which fitted *Paul* for Service, by keeping him humble after transporting Revelations; too frequently cast down an ordinary Minister below a Meetness for his Duty.

Surely Men of this Make, Men thus impressible, and that in such a World as this; Men in the best of whom there be such Remains of Sin, to excite all which Satan has such access, may well cry out, What Man is fit for these things? Who is like to acquit himself tolerably in this Work? Who is not like to be a Reproach to this Office, and disappoint the Ends of it, when we all have need to subdue our own Lusts,
and

and constantly watch against the corrupt Motions of our Hearts in every Holy Undertaking? Were we Angels by *Nature* as well as by Office, it would lessen our danger: But we are Men under the Scars of our Apostacy, Who therefore among these is sufficient?

8. The Station we are in is influential on *very many* for Good or Evil.

Our very Office renders our Faults and Virtues more *observed* and *imitated*, few take notice of the Crimes of a common Person; nor do they incline so strongly to Imitation. But many take notice of a Minister's Faults; not a few will despise the Office for the sake of their Scandals, or by their Veneration for it be more induced to follow their evil *Examples*. They think the Faults can be but small if any, and certainly must not be dangerous (whatever the Preacher for Political Ends or Custom denounceth against them) for, say they, if he believed them so destructive, he would never commit them; or if they be dangerous Faults, they cannot be so fatal to us, as they must be to him, because of his Function. Hence God accuseth the

Mal. 2. 6. *Priests, You have caused many to Stumble at the*
 Jer. 23. *Law. And from the Prophets of Jerusalem is Pro-*
 25. 32. *faneness gone forth into all the Land. If we err in*
Opinion, many will be misled. They cause my Peo-
ple to err by their Lies and by their Lightness. On
the other hand the good Example of a Minister
makes his Doctrine more credible, and allures
Multitudes to receive it, and if they be sound
in the Faith, others will be established.

No Minister goes to Heaven or Hell alone, some or other he carrieth with him to his own eternal Joy or Sorrow. *If the Law of Truth was in his Mouth, and Iniquity was not found in his Lips; he walked with me in Peace and Equity, he did turn many from Iniquity.* But it's God's Threatning against the Unfaithful, *They shall not profit my People at all; yea sometimes they make their Followers twofold more the Children of Hell than themselves.*

Mal. 2. 6.

Jer. 23.

32.

Mat. 23.

15.

The *Frame* of our Spirits will impress our People. They are generally peaceable or turbulent, warm or cold, lively or dead, tender or obdurate, strict or careless (as well as judicious or weak) as the Minister is. We read in the Seven Churches of *Asia*, the Angels and the Churches were commended for the same Excellencies, and reproved for the same Faults; the same were common to both, and began in the *Angels* as most influential.

Nay the State and Temper of the Ministry in any Church or Nation, is a very ordinary *Prognostick* of the Condition of the People; God's Approaches and Desertions begin with the Ministers, and so descend to the People. If his Spirit be poured forth on the Ministers, his Operations will not be long suspended from the Peoples Hearts. *Jerusalem is soon to be called the Throne of the Lord, after he gave them Pastors after his own Heart.* But if God judicially give up a Ministry to Blindness and Disorders, he hath no purpose to maintain a flourishing State among the People. When the *Angel of Sardis* was given up to deadness, it's said as a thing very unusual;

Jer. 3. 15.

17.

Thou

Thou hast a few Names even in Sardis, that have not defiled their Garments : But a few Names, and even in Sardis, imports, That it was a Wonder there were any such Names at all under such a dead Ministry. It's of no small concern therefore to a Christian Nation, what appears to be the *Spirit and Frame* of its Ministers: For besides the natural Tendency thereof to influence Peoples Minds and Manners by correspondent Performances, there is also a *presaging* Indication of what will befall such a People, and that both as to the inward and outward Man. The History of *Israel*, in many Ages, might be brought to inforce this, and so might that of the Christian Church in all places, particularly in *Britain*. The State of Souls, as to the Power of Religion, and that of the Nation, as to outward Prosperity, has been foretold by the Disposition of the Clergy. Were Men convinced hereof, they wou'd not discourage a faithful Ministry, nor contribute to make it otherwise; of which too many are guilty. But however insensible People are of their own Interest, it's enough to awaken us, that so many of them are like to be influenced by us in their greatest Concernments: The very *Number* asserted should force us to cry, *Who is sufficient?*

9. The *Account* to be given by us is *strict*, and the *Issues* of our Ministry are great as to *our selves*.

Luke 16. 2. You will hear Christ with a Heart-impressing Power, saying, *Give an Account of thy Stewardship*. Was it faithfully discharged? was it fulfilled, or no? He who had so great a Concern in

in it, He whose *Eye* was on thee in all thy Aims, Preparations and Performances, will be your Judge. He'll demand an Account of the Souls committed to thy Care, and the *Trust* he reposed in thee. Have you watched and fed the Flock as diligent Pastors? Have you divided the Word aright, giving each their Portion as their case required? Have any perished, or backslidden, or been unimproved or misled, or uncomforted by your Neglect or ill Example? Have you followed after Righteousness, Godliness, Faith, Love, Patience, Meekness, fought the good Fight of Faith, and kept this Commandment without Spot, and unrebukable, according to my solemn Charge? Such things will be adjudg'd at the appearing of our Lord Jesus. Conscience will not then be blinded, bribed or seared.

The Rewards or Punishments sentenced here-upon, will not be common. If you be pronounced Faithful, you'll receive the greater Degrees of Glory; yea, tho' you have not succeeded, your Reward is sure; your Complaint, *I have labour'd in vain, and spent my Strength for nought,* will not hinder from saying, *Yet surely my Judgment is with the Lord, and, my Reward with my GOD.* But if you have been unfaithful, the Blood of others will be required of you, and their Misery be an Aggravation of yours. The betraying so great a Trust, and abusing so sacred an Office, will be proportionably avenged. Chrysostom thinks, few Ministers get to Heaven; I'm sure, if they do not, they will be lodg'd in the thickness of Darkness; for their Sins are aggravated above others: The Priest's Sacrifice for him-

Lev. 4.
3, 14.

himself, was to be *equal* with that of the *whole* People. We have the Sins of many imputable to us, as well as our own; and the Souls of many to account for, as well as our own Souls.

This is a Consideration so awful, that the most stupid Minister must be alarm'd, and agree to the Apostle's Exclamation, *Who is sufficient!* Who is fit to manage this Office so as to give a good Account of it upon this strict Enquiry? Who can discharge it answerably to that great Happiness, or extreme Misery which will ensue upon the manner of his executing it?

Upon a review of these nine Particulars, which are some of the Grounds of this Exclamation, I dare appeal to your own Consciences.

Quest. 1. Whether you have not the highest Reason to be affected with the Greatness of your Work, and to cry out, *Who is sufficient* for it? If your Hearts are unmoved, plead these things closely with your selves. Can it be a small or easie thing rightly to execute this Office, when I consider the Perfections of that GOD, whom I therein personate and stand so near to, the great and glorious Purposes I subserve by it, the Spirituality, Difficulty and Variety of the Work itself, the amazing Matters depending on my Success or Unsuccessfulness, the Obstacles to my Success, which are in the Condition of the Men with whom I am employ'd, the Opposition and Discouragements which attend the faithful Discharge of my Duty, the great Indispositions which I feel in my self to the faithful Performance of this Work, the great Number that will be influenced for Good or Evil by my Management

nagement of this Office, and the strict Account I must give of this Trust, and the glorious Rewards or severe Punishments I shall receive, as I discharge it? Surely, if our Hearts are not obdurate, we must be awaken'd by such Considerations, to say, Who hath Light, Love, Patience, Courage, Stedfastness, Faith, Zeal, Vigour, Prudence, Tenderness, Spirituality, Holiness and Publick Spiritedness, meet for such an Employ? Who is enough purged from Flesh and Earth? Who is duly mortified, elevated, purified, and enlarged in Heart? Who is fitly circumspect and exemplary in his Conversation? Who stands near enough to GOD, and is proportionably assisted and filled with his Spirit, for this Work of the Ministry? And consequently, *Who is sufficient for it?*

Quest. 2. Whether a Heart insensible and unaffected with the Greatness and Difficulty of the Ministerial Work, must not ensnare you to a pernicious *Abuse* of your Office, and declare your dangerous *Unfitness* for it?

This *Stupidness* springs from Infidelity, Profaneness of Spirit, Contempt of GOD and Things divine, a Disregard of Christ's Concernments in the World, slighty Thoughts of his Judgment and of Eternity, and grossest Carelesness of your own and others Salvation. All join to make you unconcerned.

Now when these prevail in your Hearts, how can you expect but that your Office will prove a Snare? For you'll profane it, you'll abuse your Encouragements and Gifts to carnal Purposes,

poses, and pervert all against the Designs of its Institution. Your Performances will be defecrated to your Ambition and Covetousness, and managed as these may be best subserved. Can any wonder that such Distempers of Soul should find Excuses against every part of your Work wherein the Flesh is not gratified? and that what you perform should be in a trifling, dead, and deceitful manner?

Whatever be your Gifts, you are *unfit* for this Office, while your Hearts are incapable to be moved to a sense of the Greatness and Difficulty of it: For if those Evils govern which thus harden the Heart, you want that Faith, Fear, and Love to GOD and Souls, which are the *Principles* of faithful Service: Your Ends and *Designs* will be carnal, which are not only below, but contrary to the Honour of Christ, and the Salvation of Souls, for which your Work was appointed. You can feel no Power in GOD's *Promises*, to excite and animate you in your Work; nor in his *Threatnings*, to guard you against Unfaithfulness or Apostacy. The Assistance of the *Holy Spirit* you have no ground to expect; nay, He is provoked by your corrupt Temper and Performances, to send his blasting *Curse* upon all your Labours. How seared therefore and self-flattering must he be, that esteems himself fit for the Ministry, who has neither Principle, End, Encouragement, nor Assistance proper to it? who has neither Concern nor Hope to be successful in it? and who cannot *savour* or be affected with any part of his Work, further than his Lusts are gratified or provided for?

These

These things should strike deep into your Minds, and excite you to pray for, and sincerely endeavour a juster Sense of the *weight* of the Ministerial Office. You arrive to the height of Profaneness, when you can mock at its being an hurtful Snare; and you, by your Unfitness, accounted *Usurpers* in the sight of Christ. If you would prevent both, get your Hearts deeply affected: for the Graces effectually disposing to this, do render a gifted Person meet for the Office, and incline him to such a discharge of it, as, by Divine Influence, proves *saving to himself and others*. 1 Tim. 4. 16.

I shall mention some things which may be infer'd.

Inf. 1. Is it not strange, that every *weak* Man is now ready to think himself sufficient for the Ministry?

That so eminent an Apostle accounted it a difficult Employ, ought to abate the confidence of ignorant Persons, who have neither *acquired* Gifts, nor appear to have any by *Inspiration*. These bring the Ministry into Contempt, and oft hazard the Souls of many by their ignorance of the Terms of Salvation, and obnoxiousness to erroneous Notions about fundamental Truths.

The *Knowledge* of Christian Doctrines and Duties is *obstructed*, by making those who are pleased with what affect the Senses, impatient of hearing any thing solid and improving: It's a wonder, that a loud Utterance of some honest plain Truths should bring so many to follow them; but one Reason of it is, that they deli-

ver nothing but what these knew *as well* before, and in no other *manner* than what encourageth Hopes, that shortly they also may become Preachers.

Mat. 15.
14.

Our Lord Jesus gives warning, *If the Blind lead the Blind, both shall fall into the Ditch*; but the blinder the Self-conceited are, the less capable of Conviction: otherwise they would see that Christ never called any to this Work, who wanted Education, that he qualified not by Miracle; and so supplied them by *extraordinary* Gifts, who were defective in such as are acquired in the usual way. A tolerable Knowledge of the Greatness of this Undertaking would effectually dissuade the Unqualified from an Office which they assume, because emboldned by their Ignorance of it.

Inf. 2. They are not duly sensible of the weight of this Office, who join other stated Employments therewith.

In Cases of Necessity, Scandal, and the far better Prospect of Success, an *Apostle* may be a
 Acts 18.3. *Tent-maker*. But this is no Plea for others, who not only want St. Paul's Revelations, but for Pomp, Power, or unnecessary Riches, in-
 2 Tim. 2. *tangle themselves with other Affairs of this Life*,
 4. besides that of the Ministry: For our Apostle declares, that *such please not GOD who called them to be Ministers*. He also chargeth Timo-
 1 Tim. 4. *thy to give up himself wholly to those things* which
 14, 15, 16. concerned his Office, and to *confine himself thereto*. They who endeavour to be Faithful, will find neither Heart nor Leisure for more Business, but account themselves defective when they

they have done their utmost. The twelve Apostles thought it unreasonable to leave the Word so far as to serve Tables, and therefore ordained Deacons with this Resolution, *But we will give our selves continually to Prayer, and to the Ministry of the Word.* When others have the same high Thoughts of their Office, and no higher Thoughts of the World, they'll abandon worldly Incumbrances, from a Conviction, that the whole Man, with all their time, is scarcely sufficient for Gospel-Work.

Inf. 3. Of all Men, a Minister ought to perform his whole Work in a humble dependance on the Assistance and Blessing of Christ.

Persons in every Undertaking must expect Disappointment, if they acknowledge not GOD therein. But the Nature and Difficulty of our Work is such, as must awaken the most Inconsiderate to Despair, further than their Expectation is from Christ. If he withhold his Help, no part of our Work can be rightly performed; if he deny his Blessing, the best Performances are in vain. When the Apostle had recommended himself by an account of his successful Labours, to prevent all shew of Boasting, adds, *Such Trust have we, through Christ, to GOD-ward, not that we are sufficient of our selves to think any thing as of our selves, but our Sufficiency is of GOD, who has made us able Ministers, &c.* q. d. It is of Him that we conceive a Thought that's fit to benefit Souls: It's of Him that that becomes successful to any Man's Conversion. Every Saint is the Epistle of Christ ministred by us, who are also enabled by Him so to minister.

His Anointing we are prepared Instruments ; by His efficacious Power our Preparations are effectual.

He that trusteth in himself will find his Work *unapt*, and his Labours justly *blasted*. The Attempts of such discover their Ignorance of the Men they deal with, and the Matters they deal about, as well as unacquaintedness with themselves. We call to the *Dead* that they should live a spiritual Life ; What are we ? Where's the Virtue and Might in us or them, to make them rise ? If it be not a Divine Power we rely on, Prayer and Thanksgivings to God for Success are undue and needless ; for these argue some effectual Communications from him, which exceed the Creatures Ability.

2 Cor. 4. 7. But who feels not by his own Insufficiency, that *we have this Treasure in Earthen Vessels, that the Excellency of the Power may be of God, and not of us ?* And therefore undertake no part of your Duty, nor Preparations for it, without Prayer for his Help, and that from a Heart renouncing all Self-Confidence.

Infer. 4. The best accomplished Minister may find room for Improvement.

After all our Experience and Attainments we have cause still to say, who is sufficient for these things ? yea the better qualified, the livelier Apprehensions of Insufficiency, which are a Motive to be constantly improving. Whereas he that thinks himself perfectly fit, is the most unfit, and like to continue so. *Timothy* had the Advantage of knowing the Scriptures from a *Child*, by a good Education ; he enjoy'd greatest Assistance

stance by *Paul's* Converse, he was ordained by ^{2 Tim. 3.} him in Conjunction with the *Presbytery*; and as ^{14. and} a further Instance of his Eminency, he was high- ^{Chap. 1. 6.} ly entrusted as an *Evangelist*: Nevertheless he ^{1 Tim. 3.} was to give attendance to *Reading*, to *Exhortation*, ^{13.} to *Doctrine*, to meditate on these things, and give up himself wholly to them, that his profiting might appear to all, or in all things. The greatest Excellencies of Light and Grace, and the highest Measures attainable will find occasion for use, and exceed not the Merits of this Office.

Infer. 3. People have great reason to support their Ministers, and not add to their Burden.

Our Blessed Lord has considered our Frame, and appointed Relief for us, by what he in-join'd as the People's Duty, which if discharged, wou'd not only prevent much of our Hardships, but comfort us in our Work. Hereof I wou'd mind you who have chosen him for your Pastor, who is to be ordained. Pray for him, ^{1 Thess.} or you'll be blameable if his Labours are not ^{5. 25.} suited to your Benefit. Provide for him things ^{1 Cor. 9.} necessary for his Subsistence, or you are access- ^{7. 11.} sary to those Distractions which unfit him for his Work; as also chargeable with Injustice in with-holding what's your Debt, and not a Boon. Profit by him, or he will be dejected under all your Encouragements; if you do not reverence him, ^{Heb. 13.} his Endeavours will be too much despised to ^{17.} avail you; if you obey him not in what he in-joins by Christ's Authority, you rebel against a plain Command, and it will not be profitable but harmful to your selves. Be tender of his Reputation, which Satan will not be wanting to

attack; tho Men little consider how that Enemy is served, and the Work of Christ obstructed, as well as the edifying Influence of the Word hindred by aspersing Ministers; all which you counter-act when you vindicate his Reputation.

Did you know the Burden, Temptations, sollicitous and aking Hearts of Ministers, Pity to them, and a Regard to your own Souls Interest, would incline you to be more forward in your Duty towards them, than in observing their Infirmities; and aggravating their Trouble. The worst Men God charged to *do his Prophets no harm*; but if you wou'd *find Mercy in the Day of the Lord you must refresh them, and not be asham'd of their Chain* when they are persecuted by the Wicked. I shall conclude with

Psal. 105.
15.

2 Tim. I.
16, 18.

An Exhortation to you who are ordained.

This Sacred Office you have undertaken, your Qualifications have been judg'd sufficient (upon Trial and full Proof) by those Presbyters who invested you in this Office, as Instruments of Conveyance. This Church has called you to the more stated Execution of this Office among them as *their* Pastor, in a special manner, tho a Minister of the Catholick Church, What I shall say to you in particular will tend,

1. To fix upon your Conscience what may stir you up at all times, and in all things, to execute your Office *worthily*.

My whole Discourse is so adapted to this purpose, that you cannot be negligent

gent if you faithfully apply it to your self. And I charge you in the Sight of God who quick-
 neth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before
 Pontius Pilate witnessed a good Confession, that
 you keep this Commandment without Spot unreb-
 ukeable, until the Appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 Forget not, neglect not what you heard. Re-
 member you are a Minister of Christ by special
 Dedication and his Commission. What you do,
 do it faithfully as unto him, and as one short-
 ly to render an account. Dare to say nothing
 in the Name of Christ, but what you believe
 to be his Mind; and preach that in no other
 manner, than what is directed by a true Zeal for
 his Glory, and most tends to the Salvation of
 your Hearers; for it will be bitterness at last to
 reflect on your having trifled in a Work on
 which so much depends. Feel and live what
 you preach, and in your whole Behaviour lay
 up for comfortable Reviews at Death and Judg-
 ment; avoiding whatever would hinder or ab-
 bate your rejoicing in the Testimony of your Con- 2 Cor.
 science, that in Simplicity and godly Sincerity, not 1. 12.
 with fleshly Wisdom, but by the Grace of God, you
 have had your Conversation in the World. To this
 end remember what a high and difficult Office
 you have received; remember what depends on
 it as to your self and many others, and that the
 jealous Eye of God is upon your Spirit, Designs Rev. I. 14.
 and Actings. Forget not the Solemnity of this
 Day, and the Exercise of your own Mind there-
 in. Call oft to mind what Vows of God are up-
 on you. Upon all momentous Occasions ask your
 self, Is this becoming the Profession I made? Does
 it

it answer the *Engagements* I put my Soul under, the *Prayers* sent up in my behalf, and *solemn Charge* Christ laid upon me by his Minister?

2. To Strengthen and *encourage* your Heart in the worthy Discharge of your Office.

I grant you are called to hard and awful Work, and it may be costly. But Christ hath sufficiently provided against Despondency, and in his Name I require you to be well *satisfied* with your Work, and the Provision he has made to carry you thro' the Hardships of it. You already heard what he requires of *your People* for your Support. Besides that, you may find in many other things he has very agreeably prepared for your Relief. Shall you meet with *Contempt* from the World? then consider, your employ is the greatest *Honour* that can be put upon Man, you are an *Angel* by Office, you are anointed an instrument to plant the *Heavens*, and to serve the greatest Purposes of our Lord on Earth.

Rev. 2. 1. When you are exposed to *danger*, it may well compose your Heart, that Christ *holdeth the Stars* (*i. e.* his Ministers) in his right Hand, none can pluck them thence; if any hurt them they must strike them there; and therefore you can suffer nothing beyond what he permits for gracious Ends: and from destructive Evils, you are altogether safe; but your Enemies however great will pay dear for their Attempt.

When,

When you meet with strong or many Opposers, Gird up thy Loyns, speak unto them all I command thee, be not dismay'd at their Faces: For behold *Jer. 1. 17, 18.* I have made thee this Day a defended City, and an Iron Pillar, and brasen Walls against the whole Land, against the Kings, the Princes, the Priests, and the People of the Land. GOD by this Text has sometimes spirited me to a Contempt of Opposition. When a Prospect of Unsuccessfulness afflicts you, remember its the Concern of the Almighty you are engaged in, he is the GOD of the Spirits of all Flesh, he will make the People willing in the Day of his Power. His Word shall not return *Psal. 110. 3.* void, but shall accomplish that which I please, *Isa. 55. 11.* and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. And whatever be the Event, you are unto *2 Cor. 4. 15.* God a Sweet Savour of Christ.

When your hard Labour, Difficulties, Self-denial, and Trials are most irksome; consider your Reward will be proportioned to all this. If the Aspect of present things deject you, look at those unseen things which are eternal, that exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory; hereby under the heaviest Burthen you will not faint, but tho your outward Man perish, your inward Man will be renewed Day by Day. *2 Cor. 4. 16, 17, 18.*

I cannot instance every Case, but you'll find all provided for in that one blessed Promise. *Mat. 28. 20.* Lo I am with you always even to the end of the World; the Officers he employs in every Age are intituled to this Treasure, as well as those of the First Age. Keep your Mind believingly attentive to this alway; Lo I am with you, to qualify and succeed you in whatever Work I call

call you to. *Lo I am with you*, to comfort you by my Presence and Spirit when your Hearts are grieved. *Lo I am with you*, to defend and strengthen you in Trials, tho *all Men forsake you*; whiles he *stands with you*, there can be no just Cause of Fear or Faintness; your need no other Encouragement; this you shall never want if you continue Faithful, and hereupon you may conclude, *the Lord shall deliver me from every Evil Work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly Kingdom.*

THE

THE
NATURE and NECESSITY
OF A
Gospel-Ministry.

COL. IV. 17.

Say to Archippus, Take heed to the Ministry thou hast received of the Lord, that thou fulfil it.

WHEN Christ spake singly to one Church, he adds, *He that has an* Rev. 3. 3 *Ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith* 13. *unto the Churches.* I may so apply the Text to all you in the Ministry. I say to each, *Take heed to the Ministry you have received of the Lord, that you fulfil it:* For it is your Concern as truly as his in my Text, and recorded for common Use. Philem. ver. 2.

What *Archippus* was besides a Minister, and *St. Paul's Fellow-Soldier*, we read not. Whether his Negligence was tacitly reprov'd, is not so certain as that this Caution is necessary for every

every Minister. Nor is it so much matter *who* was to speak to him, as that the Spirit of GOD, by the Apostle, sent him this Message, and directs the same to us in the same Office.

Y The Words are a Charge to Ministers; wherein you find,

1. The principal Matter of the Charge, *Fulfil the Ministry thou hast received of the Lord.*

2. A necessary Duty subservient to it, *Take heed to the Ministry, $\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\gamma\epsilon$, see to, and consider this Office, and the manner of your Performances in the execution of it; as also, retain an awakened sense of the necessity of fulfilling it.*

Observ. Ministers of the Gospel are charged by the Lord, to take such heed to the Ministry they have received of him, as to fulfil it.

I shall treat of four Things, which will comprehend the scope of this Observation.

I. *What this Ministry is, which is to be regarded and fulfilled.*

II. *In what respect it is in the Lord that Men receive it.*

III. *What it is to fulfil the Ministry so received.*

IV. *What it is to take heed to do so: And then apply this*

Q. I. *What this Ministry is, which is to be regarded and fulfilled?*

1. It

1. It is not every Occasional Service; tho' sometimes that's intended by the Word: Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when Acts 12. they had fulfilled their Ministry; i. e. delivered the Relief the Disciples sent by them to the Elders 1 Cor. 16. for the Brethren in Jerusalem. Nor is here intended that Trust committed to Magistrates, who yet are called Ministers, as they by Coercion serve a common Good in a civil Capacity. 4. Angels are employed in a Ministry to the Heirs Heb. 1. of Salvation, and they executing Divine Purposes in a way of Judgment or Mercy, are called GOD's Ministers, as connoting their obediential Observance of his Will. But tho' these blessed Spirits are oftner useful to us, and in more Instances than we observe, yet our Ministry, in the Text, is of a distinct sort.

2. Ministry is oft put for the proper Service of Officers appointed by GOD for sacred Work in his Church.

Under the Old Testament it's applied to the Priests and Levites, and notes the same as is expressed by the word *Λειτουργία*. In the New Testament it's used in a general sense, common to all Church Officers: He gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints for the Work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ. The Ministry is mentioned as a Trust common to all, Church-Officers, as to its Author, End, Interest, and some degree of Qualifications and Duty. This is applied to extraordinary Officers, viz. the Apostles; He was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this Ministry. St.

St. *Paul* thanketh Christ Jesus, who enabled him,
 1 Tim. 1. and put him into the Ministry, i. e. into the Of-
 12. fice of an Apostle, to be inspired, employed,
 and assisted as such. It's applied also to *Evan-*
*gelist*s, who were extraordinary Officers: St. *Paul*
 2 Tim. 4. chargeth *Timothy*, to do the Work of an *Evan-*
 5. *gelist*, and make full Proof of thy Ministry; sc. To
 the utmost of thy extraordinary Gifts assist us
 Apostles, in publishing the Gospel, and erect-
 ing Churches every where, without a fixed Pa-
 storall Relation to any.

The Ministry is ascribed to *ordinary Officers*,
 viz. *Presbyters*. The Text respects this in a spe-
 cial manner; for there appears no reason to
 account *Archippus* more than a Presbyter, and
 scarce any do think him to be less. As for *Dea-*
cons, they have an Office terminating on the
 Poor, as their proper Objects; their Work is
 to minister Supplies to them; for this End the
 Acts 6. Office was instituted, to serve Tables and not to
 preach the Gospel; and therefore such Deacons
 as preached, did it not by virtue of that Office,
 but as Persons extraordinarily called thereto.
 1 Tim. 3. We may be further convinced hereof, by the
 8, 9. Qualifications of this Officer, compared with what
 is required in such as are to labour in the Word
 and Doctrine. As their Work differ, so all that's
 enjoined to give a fitness for the Deacon's Of-
 fice, is short of what's necessary in every one,
 who is to be ordained to minister in the Gospel.
 Nor will the contrary be proved by the word
διακονῶ, being applied to some, who were Mi-
 nisters of the Gospel, as *Tichicus*, who is called
 Col. 4. 7. a faithful Minister, and fellow Servant in the Lord,
 and

and a faithful Minister in the Lord: Yea, the Eph. 6.21. same word *διδάσκων* is ascribed to our Lord Jesus Rom. 15.8. Christ, who was a Minister of the Circumcision; 1 Cor. 3. also to the Apostle, and to Apollo, Ministers by 5. whom you believed; yea, to Women, as Phebe. Rom. 16.

3. The Ministry to be regarded and fulfilled^{1.} by us, is that to which the Office of Presbyters authorizeth and obligeth us.

What was peculiar to the Apostles or Evangelists is above us; what's proper to Deacons only, reacheth not our Function, nor are we to intermeddle therein, otherwise than as a higher Office may include a lower. Every Office in the Church of Christ, must be appointed by him; or no special Work, Authority or Obligation, attend such as are invested in that Office as Ministers of Christ.

That we may the better apprehend this, I shall treat thereof in the following Particulars:

1. The Lord Jesus has instituted the Office of Presbyters.

As Head of the Church, he had Authority to appoint, and a Fulness to qualifie Men for this Office. His Apostles were his inspired Instruments, infallibly to signify his Will; and what they, under the Conduct of his Spirit, instituted in his Name, that our Lord Jesus appointed.

Paul and Barnabas ordained Elders, *ἐπισκοπούς*, Acts 14. in every Church; such GOD set in the Church, 23. first Apostles, then Prophets, then Teachers: 1 Cor. 12. 28. And the Holy Ghost is said to have made these Acts 20. Elders Overseers or Bishops of the Flock, to feed the 28. Church of GOD, which he hath purchased with

his own Blood: He, that is to say, Christ Jesus, who is GOD as well as Man. Also, He gave some Apostles, some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers. Whatever is objected against Christ's instituting this Office, must overthrow the New Testament, and thereby all Christianity; and they who would put an end to this Office, unless they shew where Christ disannull'd it, or shall erect any other sacred Officer without his Commission, they usurp his Authority, and divest him of his peculiar Right.

Eph. 4.
11.

2. The Wisdom and tender Care of Christ for this World, are express'd in the appointment of this Office, to be a *standing Ordinance in the Christian Church*.

The extraordinary Officers ceased when the Scripture-Canon was finished, the Gospel published, and confirmed sufficiently by miraculous Gifts and Operations, and so many Churches planted as were sufficient for the Propagation of Christianity among Jews and Gentiles. As the continuance of them was necessary till these things were effected; so when our Lord thought meet to make no further use of these extraordinary Officers, he was pleased to treat with Men by more ordinary Means; and saw, in this case, the use and benefit of a *standing Gospel-Ministry*, which he therefore appointed to continue. Yea, nor do they consider the State of Mankind, who discern not the necessity of some Mens being invested in an Office, that should authorize and bind them to it as their proper business. For the State of this World had been next to hopeless, if none had been appointed by Office to endeavour

deavour Mens Conversion; and the Church in danger without all Officers to seal the Covenant Blessings, and further edify them by Doctrine, who were converted; as also to exercise Church-Discipline towards such, as their Scandals or Recovery should make it needful.

Few had undertaken such difficult exposing Work, if none had been obliged; nor had publick Administrations by the Hands of any been much regarded, when all wanted an Authority by a Divine Mission to act as the *Ministers of Christ*; whereas, acting by Office in the Name of Christ, their Transactions with Men according to his Will, do make deeper Impressions on the Conscience, and their Office gives a greater Assurance to themselves, from his special Presence and Help.

The Holy Ghost saith, *How shall they preach* Rom. 10. *except they be sent?* *How shall they to any great* 15. *purpose?* *How will they with any good Heart?* *How dare they with hope of Impunity?*

Obj. I know it's surmised, that Mens Poverty, and the Profit and Honour which Ministers receive, will encline them to this Work, without the Obligation of an Office.

Sol. I shall not in Reply to this, mention, that Poverty and Contempt have frequently discouraged. But supposing these Invitations of Profit and Honour, it ought to be considered, that both proceed from an Apprehension, that they are by Office the Ministers of Christ. For, did all People think these Preachers were not sent by him, and that they administered Sacraments

ments no more in the *Name of Christ* than any other Man who pretended to no Office, their envied Profit and Honour would soon prove too inconsiderable, to invite the Unobliged, or encourage Preparatory Studies. Yea, they would be so poor and contemptible, as to discourage the Unsent, who now usurpingly intermeddle in the Ministry, from horrid Pride, because they see the Office still appears to retain some Honour in the World.

So that whatever is pretended, they who would nullify the Ministerial Office, truly design that the Gospel should *not at all* be preached, nor have any good effect to the propagating of Christianity. They contend for the Employ of the *Uncalled*, (whom the *Unqualified* will soon follow,) and would exclude Ministers from double Honour, (tho' all impartial Men know, that Christ's appointing the essential Qualifications and peculiar Duties of, and double Honour to the stated Labourers in the Word, connotes, that they are to act by Office;) but all is to bring the Office into such contempt as all shall be ashamed to undertake it, and none be unprejudiced against receiving spiritual Benefit by a Gospel-Ministry.

If Christ had left his Church without standing Officers, it had been as Flocks without Shepherds, large Families without Stewards, Cities without Watchmen, Schools without Teachers, Societies, by him instituted, to be perpetuated for the greatest Ends, without Rulers, tho' no Societies be so tempted to run into Confusion, nor their Disorders so scandalous and fatal to his Interest.

But

But if *Divine Revelation* is to be credited, our Lord has provided Officers to act in subordination to himself in all these several respects; and Presbyters are variously demominated, as by Office related to Churches, under those different Appellations: They are *Pastors* of the *Flock*, under him the great Shepherd; *Stewards* of his Family; they are *Watchmen*, *Teachers* and *Rulers*. They have Duties injoin'd on them answerable to these Names, and Christ has commanded the Peoples Regards for them as standing and acting in such Relations to them. Who ever makes account of spiritual Blessings, will thankfully confess, that when Christ was ascended, Apostles, Prophets and Evangelists, were great Gifts to Men; and when these were removed, that *Pastors* and *Teachers* were also great Gifts to Men, who after the Foundation was laid by the former, are to enlarge and edify the Church from Age to Age. Eph. 4. 8, 11, 12.

Against this Office the Devil has the greatest spite, and therefore to his utmost influenceth Persons from every Quarter to attempt its Extirpation. The Profane, the Enthusiast, the Politician, can meet in this Point for very opposite Ends. Nor is he remiss in tempting *Ministers* to *expose* by Scandals, and to *abuse* this Office, by assuming a Power not belonging to them. This ought to be bewailed as the Enemies greatest Advantage; but yet that they should so improve it, is most *unreasonable*: For is that Office *bad*, because its Sacredness makes the Crimes of Ministers the *more* dishonourable, and lesser faults in them to appear Enormities? or, Why

ought this Office more *than others* be extinguished, because some Men abuse it? Has not *Magistracy* (yea all *sorts* of it) been abused? And if that's an Ordinance that must not *cease* because of Abuses, neither ought this which is at least as useful to Mankind, and more necessary to the Ends of Religion; and most safely *guarded* against Abuses by its *holy Rules*, if they be observed.

Consider further the Lord Jesus had put the *Christian Church* in a worse Case than the *Jewish Church*, if he had not appointed a Ministry to continue to the end: For the Jewish Church had the *Priests* to expound the Law, bless the People, manage Church-Censures, and lead in their Worship; these things belong'd to their Office as truly as offering Sacrifices. The Christian Church has in all Ages as great need of the like helps, for human Nature is subject to the same Temptations, and retains the same corrupt Inclinations and Weaknesses as formerly; and such *Helps* are now as apt to redress them: Yea the Christian Church, after an end to extraordinary Gifts, stands in greater need of these Helps: For its Extent is to various Nations, and it has not the *Urim and Thummim* to direct, and extraordinary Revelations by Angels and Prophets to teach, reprove and reform them, as GOD afforded to the *Jewish Church*. And further, the Christian Church is forewarned of greater Dangers by various Hereticks, and the very long Reign and Rage of *Antichrist*. By such things we see the greater Necessity of a standing Ministry.

Nor

Nor can we think our Lord, who intended the Christian Church to be *more glorious* in Light, Purity, Extent, Order and Beauty, should be *less* furnished with Helps necessary thereto. *He* Heb. 3. 2. *was faithful* as he whose House the Church is; 6. and therefore will not leave it without necessary Laws and Officers.

Obj. If any should plead that the Perfection of the Gospel, as to Doctrines and Articles of Faith, renders this stated Office needless.

Sol. I answer, That the ordinary Priesthood under the Law was by Office to explain and maintain many Revelations of Divine Truth, which were as plainly discovered as most Articles of Gospel-Doctrines now; and moreover, in the Gospel-Church there ought to be Divine Worship in *Christ's Name*, a Godly *Discipline*, and a holy Conversation as well as Articles of Faith. As therefore there's the same necessity for divinely revealed *Rules* about these in the Christian State as in the Jewish: So the Perfection of those revealed Rules will no more be an Argument that Gospel-Ministers are now needless, than that the Priests were then so as to this part of their Office: For they had the most plain Revelation recorded as to the minutest things about Worship, and as to the greatest parts of Discipline and Conversation. It's said by *Malachi* the last sacred Penman of the Old Testament, *The Priests Lips should keep Knowledge*, Mal. 2. 7. *and they should seek the Law at his Mouth, for he is Messenger of the Lord of Hosts.* This is said not only after *Moses* Death, but after all the Discoveries by the rest of the inspired Prophets in the

Old Testament ; yet they must seek the Law at the *Priests* Mouth, and to improve in Knowledge by his Instruction, which he was by Office to be fitted for and exercised in. The Jewish People had the *Law of Nature*, yea explained by Revelation, they had also many positive Laws with other Truths plainly revealed ; Nevertheless God was kinder to them in granting this Help, than the profanely arrogant will now account it under equal, yea greater Necessity. Nay, what God threatens as the sorest Judgment, these contend for as a Privilege, *viz.* That God should remove the Churches *Candlestick*, by taking away its Teachers which gave Light, and not longer hold the Stars in his right hand for the Peoples Benefit.

Rev. 2. 5.

Acts 20.
29.

2 Tim. 2.
2.

I might further prove this standing Ministry in the Church by the Old Testament *Prophecies*, and St. *John's Revelations*, as to the last times of the Christian Church. And further shew, that as *Paul* ordained Presbyters ; so when he prophesied that *Wolves* would arise to devour the Flock, he tells them, the *Holy Ghost* had made them *Overseers* to watch that the Flock be not devoured by these erroneous Wolves. And he does not only charge *Timothy* to avoid Partiality in the Ordination of Presbyters, that none wanted the appointed Qualifications, but has an eye beyond those ; for he enjoins when he was dying, that they be able to perpetuate the Office by qualifying such as were to succeed them ; others also to whom they were to commit what things were committed to them, as Officers in trust. St. *John* also in his very old Age after the Apostles Death, addresseth his Message to the Presbyters

byters (called the *Angels*) of the seven Churches, as the standing Officers of those Churches, and likely to be so after his Departure. Yea to be so in all the *several* Periods of the visible Church to the *end* of the World, according to the Sense of Dr. *More* and others concerning those Epistles.

3. The *Work* belonging to that Ministry is various. Every Office implies Duty and Business, and this in a more especial manner. He that desireth the Office of a Bishop, desireth a *good Work*. 1 Tim. 3. What this Work is, may be collected from the 1. *Titles* given to Ministers, the *Duties* enjoined on them as such, the Encouragements and *Praise* of what they, as Officers, performed, and the *Reproofs* and *Threats* against them for Neglects and Omissions.

They are to *feed the Flock, taking the Oversight thereof*: Which, as most grant, includes the Preaching of the Word, Administration of Sacraments, leading in Church Assemblies as Guides, presiding in the Management of Church Censures as Rulers; giving publick Notice of impending Judgments and Dangers as Watchmen. These and much more belong to ordinary Pastors for the *Edifying of the Body*, both by multiplying its Members by Conversion, and improving them in Light, Holiness and Comfort; that so they may be established in the Truth, honour Christ by their Walk, and become meet for the heavenly State.

They are also in Conjunction with other Presbyters to *ordain* the Qualified to the same Office: For the Office was to *continue*, as we heard before, The Qualifications of those that were to be invested

vested in it, are fixed by the Spirit of Christ, and some or other must judge whether the Person willing to accept of the Office be qualified, and in the Name of Christ invest the Person therein, unless Self-conceitedness be the fittest Standard.

When *extraordinary* Officers ceased, they who were fittest to judge, and most concerned to preserve a fit and able Ministry, were those *ordinary* Officers who were appointed to be Watchmen and Rulers in the Church, which appears by Sacred Writ to be no other than Presbyters. These are they who in the Apostles
 1 Tim. 4. time ordained *Timothy*; or no tolerable Sense
 14. can be put on those Words, *with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery*; For the Holy Ghost was never, as we read, given by the hands of any without an extraordinary Mission; nor did any Presbyter join with an Apostle in conferring him on any; tho we find him given by
 Acts 19. the hands of *Paul* without any other hand, and by
 6. the joint hands of the Apostles *St. Peter* and *John*.
 Acts 8. 17. Nor is *Timothy* the only recorded Person on

whom Presbyters laid hands, they were those
 Acts 13. Teachers who laid their hands on *Paul* and *Barnabas*, when separated to the Work to which
 1. 3. the Holy Ghost had called them; I grant this
 Gal. 2. 15. was not to constitute *Paul* an Apostle; for that was not to be by *Mens* Instrumentality, and GOD had before this created him an Apostle. But their performing all the solemn outward Acts of Ordination upon his going to the Gentiles, shews the *Necessity* of the Ordination of all upon their first Undertaking of Ministerial
 Work,

Work, and that it *belongs* to Teachers or Presbyters to perform those solemn Actions by which they are to be ordained.

For if it was fit that an *Apostle* should be separated to this occasional Work, it must be very unfitting for any who have *no Office*, to assume the stated Work and Office without being separated thereto; nor can we doubt but that if *Paul* and *Barnabas* had not received an Office before; these solemn Acts performed by those Teachers had been an Ordination of them to their own Office at least; if not also designed for a Platform of ordaining Ministers to the Church of the Gentiles, which Dr. *Lightfoot* thinks.

Vol. 1.
p. 289.

We read also that *Barnabas* with *Paul* ordained Elders (Presbyters) in every Church. That he was not an Apostle we are sure, that he was a Prophet or Teacher before he was sent to the Gentiles is evident; and that Prophets are distinct Gifts from Apostles and Evangelists; as also Teachers from each of them, is express'd. Such as think he was one of the 70, and that Presbyters succeed them, must grant the inherent Right of Presbyters to ordain Elders. Such as think him an *Evangelist* by the foresaid Separation, if they should, with some others, judge that Presbyters succeed them, as the Apostles are succeeded by Bishops, they must grant Presbyters have the Power of Ordination, seeing *Barnabas* with *Timothy* and *Titus* had that Power.

Acts 14.
23.

Acts 13.1.

1 Cor. 12.
28. and
Eph. 4.11.

To deny the Validity of Ordinations by Presbyters, is a way to reject the necessity of all Ordinations by any, since extraordinary Officers were

were

were at an end, (so it is, and will be improved by the Enemies of a Gospel-Ministry) for the Scriptures inform us of no ordinary Officers, of GOD's Appointment, for the Christian Church, above Presbyters: They have *divers* Titles, but the *same* Office is expressed by the several Titles of Presbyters, Pastors, Teachers, Rulers, Ministers, Bishops, &c. the Name, the Qualifications, the Work, the Power, the Reward, the Honour, the Trust, are the same.

This is express'd with a Plainness, as to the Identity of the Scripture Bishop and Presbyter, as if it were designed by *Prophecy* to be a Precaution against the ensuing Mischiefs of making them different Offices. So it was that *Peter* and *John* called themselves Presbyters and not Bishops.

When *Paul* had called the Presbyters of the Church of Ephesus to Miletum, he chargeth them, saying, Take heed to all the Flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you Bishops, to feed the Church of GOD. Here Work and Name are common.

The same Apostle tells *Titus*, I left thee in Crete to ordain Presbyters in every City, if any be blameless, &c. For a Bishop must be blameless, &c. Here the Names are synonymous, and the Qualifications the same. Yea, the Reason assigned why the Presbyter must be blameless, &c. is, because a Bishop must be blameless as the Steward of GOD. Indeed, had it been said, that a Bishop must be blameless, &c. because a Presbyter must be so, it might have been, by proper Reasoning, consistent with the Bishop's Superiority in Office, as therefore the more obliged; but as they are placed,

ced, the Identity of the Bishop and the Presbyter is the *highest* that can be proved in his Favour.

The Apostle Peter exhorts the Presbyters to feed *1 Pet. 5.* the Flock, &c. and to act the Bishop's Office towards *1, 2.* it. St. Paul indeed appoints what the Qualifications of such must be, whom Timothy was to *1 Tim. 3.* ordain Bishops and Deacons, but mentions not any Qualification of a Presbyter: But this was not because the Presbyter had *no Office*, for he mentions a Consistory of them who ordained him, and forbids him to rebuke a Presbyter: Yea, requires that the Presbyters *who rule well, be accounted worthy of double Honour: 1 Tim. 5.* Nor was it because it *1, 17.* mattered not how the Presbyter was Qualified, for he was of greater Influence for the Weal or Hurt of the Church, than Deacons; and states their Qualifications in his Epistle to Titus. But the true Reason was, because the Bishop and the Presbyter had the *same Office*, and therefore the same Qualifications were requisite. And this is the more evident, because the Qualifications of the Bishop here do not exceed those of the Presbyter in Titus, and in the little wherein they differ, *lower Abilities* are required. But least the Hint about *Ruling* might argue an *Imparity*, he prevents that with advantage to the Presbyter, saying, Let the Presbyters that rule well, be *1 Tim. 5.* counted worthy of double Honour, especially, they *17.* who labour in the Word and Doctrine. And against *ver. 19.* a Presbyter receive not an Accusation but before two or three Witnesses. Here the Presbyter is to rule, and is especially worthy of double Honour, if he labour in the Word and Doctrine: And because

cause by his Ruling and Preaching, many would be irritated, and the Devil provoked, no *Accusation* should be received against him under *Phil. 1. 2. two Witnesses.* At *Philippi* also, no Officers are greeted but Bishops and Deacons.

Much more might be produced, but this may do more than convince us, That if the Holy Ghost had laid such a stress on the *Superiority* of Bishops, as to *unchurch* so many Christian Flocks, and *silence* so many qualified Persons, who have opportunity to preach the Gospel, merely because not ordain'd by them; that Holy One is too good and wise to have said so much in the Scriptures, to signify a *Parity* between the Bishop and Presbyter; and to say nothing that carries *greater Evidence*, nor *equal*, no, nor any Evidence of their *Imparity*.

Whatever is pretended as a Change *after* the Canon of the Scripture was finished, affects not any who believe the Sufficiency of the Scripture-Rule, to make the *Man of GOD perfect*, and denies the Validity of any sacred Office instituted without the plain Authority of *Divine Revelation.*

Nor, if a Sermon admitted, were it hard to prove that for some Centuries, the *Bishops* then mentioned, pretended not to the Episcopacy *since* assumed; viz. A Pastoral Superiority over hundreds of Flocks, and over their Presbyters, who stately administer the Lord's Supper among them. These latter, indeed, retain the same Name with those Bishops to whom it was at first appropriated, but in all Essentials those Bishops retained the true Office of Presbyters, and

and acted not beyond it; tho' others of the same Office join'd with them, did sometimes in a few smaller things abate its Exercise, as our Bishops do when Discipline is exercised by the *Lay-Chancellor*.

And no less easie were it to account, how it was possibly for this Change to be made, both very early, and without much observation, considering the Circumstances of the Ministers and Churches of first Ages, the gradual Approaches and Advances of the Change; the Inclinations of humane Nature to Ambition, Covetousness, Dominion and Slothfulness; and GOD's permitting these to work, as a means of the Rise of *Antichrist*, upon whose Reign and Fall so great a part of the Affairs of the Christian Church were prophesied to depend; and which was impossible whiles the parity of Ministers continued.

I shall give some short Account of this Matter; and beginning with what the Scriptures assert, I shall proceed to what ensued.

During the *Scripture* History of the State of the Christian Church, we find in Churches more than one Presbyter. It was so in *Jerusalem*, Acts 15. the like in *Ephesus*; Paul sent to *Ephesus*, and called the *Elders of the Church*: (Whence it seems evident, That the *Angel* of the Church of *Ephesus*, &c. is to be taken collectively, one for several United, and of the same Power and Trust.) St. James supposeth several Presbyters in every Church; and this seems to be the appointed Rule where it was possible; for Paul and Barnabas ordained Presbyters in every Church, and saith to Titus,

Titus, 13.

Tit. 1. 5. *Titus, I left thee in Crete, to ordain Presbyters in every City, as I appointed thee.*

In the Church of *Jerusalem*, some of the Apostles and other extraordinary Officers oft resided. We read, that the Apostles, *Peter, Paul* and *John*, frequently visited other Churches. The Presbyters were by Office to teach and rule, yet they were *subject* to them when present, and to be determined by their Direction when absent; and by the *Evangelists*, who were their Delegates.

In the greater Churches we oft meet with Evangelists, Prophets, and others of extraordinary Gifts; so in *Rome, Antioch, Corinth*, as well as more stated Teachers, which the Presbyters Office imports. But tho' many Divisions happen'd by the Attempts of false Teachers to introduce *Judaism*, or other Errors, &c. as also by the Peoples Weaknesses, &c. yet we read not of any Contest among the Presbyters, or ordinary Officers, about Superiority or Imparity in Office or Power, except by *Diotrephes*, who was blamed by the Apostle, for loving to *have the Preheminence*. In this posture the sacred Canon describes and leaves the Churches.

The Apostles, and other extraordinary Officers, having ordained Presbyter-Pastors, (yea, several, at least in the greater Churches;) and this with as much Evidence of the sameness of Office, and identity of Power, as the Case required; and no recorded Word instituting any higher Office among those ordinary Officers appointed to abide in the Church; on these Presbyters, whose Office was a standing Ordinance,
the

the Care and Government thereof devolved, when the extraordinary Officers ceased; and then they were to act to the extent of that Commission, which described and limited their Office.

But as the Office obliged each *single* Presbyter to sundry things, so there were some Matters of such *Difficulty* and *common Concern*, as not to be safely committed to a fallible single Person, as each Presbyter was. In such cases the *Presbytery* (made up of united Pastors) were to be concerned; to which they were directed not only by the Light of Nature, but by the Practice in the Apostle's time, and by their Approbation; as we see in the Ordination of *Timothy*, by the laying on of the Hands of the Presbytery; and could not but be in any Church that had many Presbyters; had Men kept to this, much Confusion, ambitious Contests, abuse of Ecclesiastical Power, and Popery with all its barbarous Villanies, had been prevented.

A Change from this to that *Imparity*, which followed, must be very gradual, or it had been too notorious to be admitted. Yet those slow *Degrees*, with some few Circumstances, are sufficient to prove, it was not from the beginning, tho' its Rise be not so evident, as those think necessary, who would have us think an Imparity in Office proved, where-ever they find a *Bishop* named in the first Ages. I hope they will not say, the Bishop of *Rome* has a right to what he now assumeth, because *Clemens* was a Bishop, who allowed but *two* Offices in the Church to be of Divine Institution.

F

That

That the Imparity was not from the *Beginning*, the Holy Scriptures testify : Of its Rise and Growth, I shall give the following Account.

When the extraordinary Officers, who erected the Churches in *Cities* with Presbyters, discontinued ; these Presbyters managed those Affairs which were difficult and of common concern, by joint Counsel as one Body. Some one of them must *moderate* in their Debates, and *lead* in the execution of what was agreed. The *most* eminent for Age and Gifts, was easily prefer'd, and continued therein especially, if his Advantages were great ; and hereby come oft to wear the most reputable of the Presbyters Titles, which seems to be that of Bishop.

When by their Labours the Christians multiplied in neighbouring Places, more Presbyters became necessary to visit and teach in those Chapels of Ease, that were erected in remote Villages and Towns, (at first by turns, and at last more stately) but both they and the People for (too long) a time, came to the *Mother-Church* in Matters of Discipline, and to partake of the Lord's Supper ; as such Places within the great Cities did before.

These later Presbyters, being *Juniors*, of lower Gifts, and probably converted as well as ordained by them, very naturally would act under the Direction of their *Seniors*, and pay a special Deference to him, who by common respect and custom *presided* in the Affairs of the *Mother-Church*, especially when he came to have a chief Hand in distributing the Church's Stock, and

and Deacons were set to other Work; but acting still in conjunction with his Fellow-Presbyters; and tho' their Honour was a little veiled by not acting alternately, yet the Identity of their Office unchallenged, and concurring in all, were satisfied.

As the *remoter* Chappels of Ease, and Presbyters grew still *more* numerous, and Heresies abounded; the *Infirmities* of Ministers and People render'd Peace and Order more difficult; especially when the *Consistory* of Presbyters could seldom meet, because of Persecution, and of their frequent Work in remote Places among the scattered Flock. Hereupon the *moderate* Precedency of the first Presbyter, was thought such a help to Orthodoxy, Peace and Order, that upon his Death, the Presbyters with the Church judgeth meet to chuse one of their Number to *succeed* him in the Advantages he possessed: Not that they gave him a *new* Office, or renounced *any part* of their own, for neither was in humane Power; but they gave him Tokens of Respect, in *suspending* their Claim to some Honour to which they had by Office an equal Title; and so the Title of Bishop, and generally his Presence in all Ordinations, became *almost* appropriated.

In some proceſs of time, some of *Diotrephes's* Temper succeeding in those Mother-Churches, claim these things as their *due*, which sprung from Decency and voluntary Respect, with a Mistake of what seem'd conducive to the publick Benefit. These still further incroach, and become Examples to other Churches *alike* advantaged,

taged, and to the great Cities more *lately* Christianiz'd; representing the Matter so conducive to the Grandeur and Safety of the Church, as well as its Peace and Order, that it must be guarded by *Canons* of Counsels, wherein themselves had far the greatest Power; yet still gulling the Presbyter with a shew of Respect, in admitting him to join with them in most Acts, and some Advantages.

In the first Preparatories and lower Degrees of the Change, there was scarce a probability of an Opposition. When it rose higher, History acquaints us, tho' the Authors are oft to be suspected of wording past things in the Dialect of their own Age; and to serve their own Turn as Sharers in the Advantage. But what Opposition could be made against the more visible Incroachments, by a poor Presbyter, who lived in the Bishop's House, or on the Alms in his disposal? (and, if active on the usurping side, in a fair way to the like Preheminence?) What was he to attempt against Custom and Canons? against rich and great Churches, fond of their Bishop's Grandeur, and their own large Extent? The Opposition was still less probable, when Christian Emperors increased the Power and Revenues of the Bishops, and the Conversion of great Cities still added to their Number.

But as the high-spirited Bishops at first multiplied, their Emulation made this *human* Expedient too weak to maintain Unity, Peace and Order: Then they proceeded on the very same grounds, as made a Bishop necessary over Presbyters; to set *Archbishops* over Bishops, *Metropolitans*

tans over these, *Patriarchs* over them, and a *Pope* as a Principle of Unity over all; who finds no way to maintain Union, but by killing all he cannot blind, nor will ever despair of healing his Wounds, whilst his *Root-impairity* of Presbyters by Office retains its Strength.

I take no Pleasure in enlarging on this Subject, tho it's become necessary by vigorous Attempts to *nullify* our Ministry. Few till of late said worse of Presbyterian Ordinations than that they were *irregular*, because a Bishop, where he might be had without sinful Terms, ought by *Canonical* Laws to join therein with Presbyters. Such acknowledge the *Intrinsic Power* of Presbyters to ordain, because these are to *lay on hands* with the Bishop; and must acquit us of *Irregularity*, as far as they allow our Reasons against the Lawfulness of those Impositions, which the Bishops insisted on as *Terms* of their Concurrence; Persons thus *sober* cannot be ignorant, what turn has still been serv'd, and as Circumstances stand, whether *Rome* or the *Reformed Church* will receive Advantage by the Men, who to nullify Presbyterian Ordination, contend not only for some Degree of Pre-heminence by *human* Law for *Order's* sake, but wou'd not abate the least unnecessary thing to such as cannot forbear thinking, that to raise a Bishop as a *Minister of Christ* by *Divine Appointment* above a Presbyter's Office, is to impose the Name of Christ on a Creature of Man's Forming: Tho they also think, that he with others *validly* ordains by a Power derived from Christ *as a Presbyter*, not-

withstanding what's accumulated by human Constitution.

(4) Ministers are *obliged and authorized* to perform the Work belonging to their Office.

1. They are obliged: For if they are not obliged, their Omission wou'd be no Fault, nor wou'd the Office connote a Trust with any Obligation to discharge it.

But if Christ have any *Authority* to command, if he has any *Propriety* in us for the disposal of our Persons and Talents by our *Dedication* both as Christians and Ministers; as also by Creation, constant Supplies and Redemption; if our Ordination-Vow engage, or the Church has any Claim to us, we are in the strongest manner *obliged* to fulfil our Ministry; for all these concur to strengthen our Bonds, and are so plain, that I need no Proof besides the Scriptures already mention'd.

The Ministry is a *Service* that must not be neglected, it's what we owe as *Servants*, which we confess by wearing the Name of *Ministers of Christ*, i. e. his Servants in a special manner, and for peculiar Work.

Therefore neither Fear, Shame, Bribes, Sloth, Pride, nor worldly Affairs can justify your deserting the Work of your Office, when GOD grants Opportunity to perform it. *Mens* Prohibitions will not discharge, nor Difficulties excuse; involuntary Incapacity is your only Plea, for thereby GOD sends a *Quietus* or Writ of Ease: Which it will be your Wisdom, to understand and take, for many have dishonoured

noured the Office by their Attempts after *incapacitating* Decays, as others have pretended it without just Cause. But the Obligation to your Work is so far from being denied, that most will expect more than your Duty, and they who deny your Office, are forward to vilify you as negligent.

2. They are *authorized* to perform what Work belongs to this Office, and enjoy what it entitles them to. I do not mean only that as to their own Conscience, they have a Liberty to do this Work, for the last Head shews they are obliged to do it. But I intend principally to assert by their being authorized, that they to whom they minister are obliged, (1.) To suffer them to discharge their Office. (2.) To submit to them (with a due regard of their Persons) in what they perform by his Commission. And (3.) That Men should expect that Christ will ratify what is so perform'd by them.

I know that there must be supposed to the first and second, That Christ who authorizeth his Officers to execute any thing he has in that *Dominion* over such, to whom he authorizeth them to minister in his Name: For wherein People owe no obedience to him, his Servants acting by his Authority, may expect to be refused. And it's also supposed in the *Third*, that Christ has a *Power* to make good what his Ministers promise, threaten and seal in his Name. For otherwise the great Design of their Ministry, and what most subserve and inforce it, are frustrated and insignificant.

Eph. 1. 22. But our Lord is *Head over all things to his Church*; All Power in Heaven and Earth is given him, he is Lord both of the Dead and Living; and therefore such as refuse to obey what he enjoins by his Ministers, with respect to himself or them, or that reject his Offers made by them, are *Rebels* against their rightful Lord. And Jesus Christ has *the Keys of Death and Hell*, he is Lord of the other World, *he is Judge of all*, has all *Fulness* of Grace, and Merit and Power to confer all his promised Blessings. He has *Might and Title* to execute all the Punishments denounced in the Gospel, which his Ministers are to preach and apply. These things may convince you that all Men owe Obedience to his Institutions, and they shall not disappoint or become vain to Men thro' any Defect on Christ's part.

Rom. 14. 9.

Rev. 1. 18.

This Supposition being cleared, it follows, that as to the Work and Regard which by Christ's Appointment, belongs to the Ministerial Office, People are to *submit* to the Claim and Performance thereof by those in that Office; and to expect an issue according to what they declare and apply agreeably to their authorizing Commission. This is included in the very Notion of every Office *subordinate* to a Supreme Ruler. It's so in Offices, Civil and Military, even to a Constable, Watchman, Steward, Captain, &c. they must be observed and obeyed in the Execution of their Office; and the Supreme Governour in whose Name they act, is concerned to abett those Officers, and ratify what they are by their Office authorized to do.

Both

Both Ministers and People shou'd carefully examine the *Directions of our Lord* ; that nothing be pretended, claimed or injoin'd under the Name of this Office, which belongs not to it ; nor that disregarded which it truly comprehends. What the Pastor requires beyond his Commission, he ought to be denied it, because therein he is an Usurper of the worst kind ; but to deny a Compliance in what his Office justly warranteth, is a Challenge to Christ's Authority, whose Officer he is.

In the three fore-mentioned Particulars, we sumn'd up the things wherein Persons are obliged to act towards Ministers.

1. They are to *suffer* them to discharge their Office.

To refuse Attendance on their Ministrations, or restrain them from executing their Office, are a Violation of the Rights of our Blessed Lord, who has authorized them to preach his Gospel, administer his Sacraments, and what else he has appointed them. And wo be to them as *Fighters against God*, who persecute them for discharging their Duty and Trust.

Acts 5.
39.

2. Men are to submit to them (with a due Regard of their Persons) in what they perform by Christ's Commission. This the Office imports, and the Spirit of GOD expressly enjoins, *Obeys them that have the Rule over you, and submit your selves, for they watch for your Souls.* Heb. 13:17. What Christ has made their Duty to enjoin in Christ's Name, is your Duty to observe for Christ's sake, who has publish'd his Will in the Scriptures, and authorized these to apply it perfo-

personally to you ; And therefore if you disobey, you rebel against him, both in Contempt of his written Word, and in Contempt of the Office instituted by him to carry on the Design of his Revelations for the Benefit of Mankind. Disobedience to his authorized Officers calling you to your Duty, is an Aggravation of the Guilt of such by whom that Duty is neglected.

Mat. 10. 14. The *Dust of their Feet* shall witness against the Disobedient, and they shall know there was a Prophet among them; tho' what the Prophet insisted on as their Duty, was written before by Moses. The Parenthesis (with a due regard of their Persons) is not an indifferent thing, for it's God's Charge, that his Ministers who rule well, and labour in the Word, be accounted worthy of double Honour. Respect and Maintenance are their Due ; and you must esteem them highly in love for their Works sake. Christ's stamp on them as his Ministers recommends them, as well as the beneficial and saving tendency of their Labours.

1 Thess. 5. 13. 2 Cor. 4. 1. 3. Men shou'd expect that Christ will ratify what his Ministers perform according to his Commission, and be suitably affected.

We cannot doubt this, unless we question his Power and Truth ; for by authorizing them to assure Men in his Name, He is Undertaker for the certainty of the things assured ; and is therefore distrusted by such, who expect not an answerable Event. The Ministers apply Gospel-Promises and Threatnings to such as the Word describes ; they also administer Sacraments to those to whom they belong by the Gospel-Rule, they suspend,

suspend, or excommunicate and absolve Persons as the same Rule directeth. In all these Cases Men ought to be affected by *Fear* and *Hope*; Sorrow and Joy, according as things are justly applied to them by the Minister. For Christ has declared; *Whose Sins you remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever Sins ye retain, they are retained.* And verily whatsoever ye shall bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on Earth shall be loosed in Heaven. John 20: 21. Mat. 18: 18.

Pastors have it not in their Pleasure to apply these according to their own Will, for an undue improper Object by their Mistake is (as to Christ) in neither a better or worse Condition. But as the Officers of Christ in a due dependence on him, are more likely than others to be assisted in judging of the Persons Qualifications, to whom they apply those Seals of the Covenant, Acts of Discipline, and Promises and Threats: So whenever the Application is made by the Minister to proper Objects, according to the Rule, these ought to reckon that Christ will confirm and execute what his Officer pronounc'd in his Name.

For instance, A true penitent Believer, when the Pastor delivers to him the Sacramental Body and Blood of Christ, ought to conclude his Sins are pardoned, and that he is accepted with GOD for eternal Salvation, and thereupon his Hope and Joy shou'd abound.

Obj. If you say, So it wou'd be upon the word of Promise, if he knew himself to be a true Believer, whether it was a Minister gave him the Sacrament or no.

Sol;

Sol. You may as well say, whether he received the Sacrament or not. For as the Lord's Supper is designed to strengthen his Hope and Joy, so is an *authorized* Officer also; and *both* by Institution. The *Word* of Promise makes not the *Sacrament* useless; nor do's the *Word* render the *Minister* unnecessary, who applies it: For Christ fails not to honour his own Appointments, by serving his End thereby. He will do and give that by the Means he ordains, which *ordinarily* he will not do or give without them. And therefore a Believer may expect, that Christ will concur with his Officer, to increase his *Assurance* that he is a pardon'd Believer; and thereupon will establish his Hope, and excite his Joy.

Yea, a Believer ought to be the more assured of his good State, because he who is an *authoriz'd* Officer of Christ, does *in his Name* administer the Sacramental Seal to him. For as the Minister, by his Office, is to *avouch* and witness for Christ, that he will perform what the Sacrament sealeth to the due Receiver; so Christ's authorizing him as his Officer to apply the Seal, is an assuring Expression that Christ is able, willing, and faithfully resolved to *accomplish* what his Officer sealed by his Appointment. This Instance of the Seals might in like manner be extended to Discipline, &c.

I might also, under this Head, shew, that whatever Acts any perform, which are *proper* to the Ministerial Office, without an Investiture in that Office, they do it unauthorized. For if no Work be *peculiar* to this Office, and to be discharged with *special* Authority, and Blessing;
the

the Divine Institution of it, as an *Office*, would reflect on the *Wisdom* of Christ, as appointing a thing *needless*; it would abate the *Honour* of his Ordinances, expose the *Church* to Uncertainty, Confusion and Danger; and deprive his Officers of the *Encouragement* and Honour, upon the Promise whereof they undertook this Function, tho' attended with such Difficulties and Hardships. Men must *destroy* the Office, (which they never can, for I have before proved it to be a *standing* Ordinance of Christ) or they must grant, that assuming the Work proper to it, is an *usurping* Invasion, attended with bitter Fruit to themselves and others.

Q. 2. In what respects it is *in the Lord*, that Men receive this Ministry?

A. It's received in the Lord, when Men become Partakers of this Ministry, as the Lord appoints, and as becometh him: The Preposition *in*, as joined with the Lord, is variously us'd, viz. as is *fit in the Lord*, i. e. as becomes his Col. 3. 18. Name, and your Relation to him. *Receive him* Phil. 2. 29. *in the Lord*, i. e. as he directs and commandeth: *A faithful Minister in the Lord*, i. e. he employs Eph. 6. 1. 21. himself in the Work of the Ministry, as the Lord appointeth, and is approved of him in doing so. Other Places might be added; but the Words in the Text include these four things:

1. That he be truly *Qualified* for this Office.

You have heard, that Christ *appointed* this Office. Now, as it had been dangerous to commit the *stating* of the Qualifications to fallible Men, so none have power to *abate* of those, which the Lord requires to be found in Ministers, nor to
insist

insist on *more*. The Qualifications appointed by the Lord, are to be found in St. Paul's Epistles to *Timothy* and *Titus*, and elsewhere. A Minister must be a Christian, but no Novice, found in the Faith, apt to teach, able to *convince Gain-sayers* by sound Doctrine, divide the Word aright, and instruct others even to a *meetness* for the same Office. He must be capable to rule his own House; and of good Report, as to his blameless and good Conversation. He must *appear* to the Ordainers, to have the Grace of GOD in truth, and look into himself that he *really* have it. In sum, he must be *able and faithful*. These places, with the nature of his Work, do evidence, That a Minister must not only be a good Man, but that he must have a *great* degree of Knowledge and Skill; otherwise the Ends of his Office cannot be answer'd, nor Contempt avoided.

2. That he be *duly called and sent*.

Rom. 10. 15. *How shall they preach, except they be sent*. To evidence your *Call*, you are to be *qualified* as before; your Hearts must be inclined and excited to this Office by *holy* Considerations, and not carnal, which is what we term an *inward* Call: There must be *some* necessity and opportunity for your Service; you are also then to be *set apart* by Presbyters, with Fasting, and Prayer, and Imposition of Hands, after a just Satisfaction given them of your Fitness; for they must lay Hands suddenly on none. The People are incompetent Judges of Fitness for the Office of a Minister, tho' they can discern what Performances best suit a Minister to be their Pastor. Nor has

1 Tim. 5. 22.

has Christ authorized them to *invest* any in this Office, tho' he allows them to *chuse* ordinarily who shall be *their* Pastor, so that they elect a *fit* one. *Deacons*, tho' far lower Officers, were not to be set apart by the *People*, nor they at liberty to *chuse* as they *pleased*; for they must *chuse* none, unless they were *fit* for that Office. The twelve Apostles said, *Brethren*, look ye out among you *Acts 6*, seven Men of honest Report, full of the Holy Ghost *3*. and Wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; *ὅς κατὰ συνάμηνον*. We, not ye, Men of honest Report, not scandalous. The Imposition of Hands is not to be slighted, seeing that in the Old and New Testaments it's used in the Designation, and Investiture in holy Offices, and pronouncing of Blessings: It was so common an Usage in the Apostle's time, that to lay on Hands on a Man (without more words) signified to *ordain* a Minister; and yet every Minister *1 Tim. 5*; ordained by *Timothy*, did not receive the Holy *22*. Ghost. It ought also to be well considered, that the disuse of it, by abating the Solemnity of Ordination, opens a Door to unqualified Usurpers, and creates Scruples against such as are better qualified. To prevent both by lawful Means, is a Duty; and if the Imposition of Hands be indifferent, qualified Preachers are culpable by the omission of that, which would uphold their Character with such as now despise them, satisfy many who scruple their Ministrations, and may prevent some future Obstacles to Service.

3. That when he undertakes this Office, he heartily *devote* and *oblige* himself to Christ, and his Purposes in this Institution.

Every

Every sincere Christian is truly *dedicated* to Christ, but a Minister is *further* dedicated, and that to the Ends for which the Office was appointed, and to the Duties it implies. This you profess, but see that your *Heart* concur; otherwise you *lye* to the Lord *Jesus*, and are unlike to execute with faithfulness the Work designed. Ministers are *Servants of the Lord*, in a more special sense than other Christians; and at their Ordination, put themselves under strict Bonds to act *as such*. The Words in *Christ*, are sometimes an Appeal to Him, as by an Oath. 2 Tim. 2. 24. *I say, the Truth in Christ*. I am sure, you appeal to him in your Vow, and make him a Party, as he whose Glory and Interest you oblige your selves to promote as your governing End, by executing your Office in a true subserviency thereto. Rom. 9. 1.

4. That he *receive this Office by the Grant of Christ, and his Authority*.

It's *He* has qualified you; for which you owe to him your thankful Praises. *He* appointed the Office, and enacted what should be your Work, Power, and Encouragement. And it's *He*, who by the Hands of the Ordainers, confers it on you. Tho' you receive it not *immediately* from *Christ*, as the Apostles did, yet you receive it *mediately* from him; *He* delivers you his Commission by the Hands of your Ordainers: The *Holy Ghost* made the Presbyters *Overseers* of the Flock, tho' not immediately. Gal. 1. 12. Acts 28. 28. And Pastors from Age to Age are *set by GOD* in his Church, as really as in the first Age. Therefore you preach and administer in his Name, and by

by his Authority ; he is personated by you as *truly*, tho' not in allthings so *infallibly*, as by the Apostles. And while you declare his Will, and keep to your Commission, you may warrantably say, *We* 2 Theff. 3. *command you in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and* 6. *Christ by us beseecheth you.* You are his *Ambassa-* 2 Cor. 5. *dors*, if you deliver his Message at the *second* 20. hand, as well as the Priests in *Malachi's* time, Mal. 2. 7. (so remote from *Aaron*) truly explaining and applying the *Recorded Law*, were the *Messen-* 1 Theff. 4. *gers of the Lord.* They who despise you, despise 8. not Men, but *GOD.* *He that heareth you, heareth* Luke 10. *me*, is certain as to you, if you follow his Di- 16. rections ; for so *he now speaketh from Heaven.* Heb. 13.

5. That he receive it as what is to be dis- 25. charged by the *Lord's Rules*, and in his *Strength.*

He is your *Lord*, and from him you must receive Directions. Your Message and Management are to be under *his* Conduct, and not after your *own* Will and Imagination ; wherein ever these guide you, neither Acceptance nor Success are to be expected. Therefore, be sure of *his Word* for your Voucher, and then fear no Opposition, for *he is with you.* Express *his* Mind, and you'll be to him a *sweet Savour* in them who 2 Cor. 2. are saved by his Grace, and in them that perish 15. by their own wilful Disobedience.

As you are cautiously to act by his Rules, so with Humility and Faith undertake all in *his Strength*: *Be strong in the Lord, and in the Power of* Eph. 6. 10. *his Might.* The Difficulty of Ministerial Work would affright every considerate Person, if he were to act alone, and to depend on his own Abilities ; But *our Sufficiency is of GOD.* Tho' 2 Cor.

he is pleased to use us as Instruments, he leaves not the Issue to *our own* Acquirements and Abilities. It's the *Ministration of the Spirit* which we subserye: and our Weapons are *mighty thro' GOD*. When the Apostle mentions his Success, he ascribes it to the same Power, by which you are to be assisted; *In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel*. Therefore go forth, depending on his Grace, expecting that the Lord will stand with you, and strengthen you: And be in a humble Disposition upon all Success, (yea, now resolve) to acknowledge that therein *Christ hath wrought by me*.

Ver. 8.
2 Cor. 10. 4.
1 Cor. 4. 15.
2 Tim. 4. 17.
Rom. 15. 18.

Q. 3. What is it to fulfil the Ministry so received.

A. 1. To perform the whole Work of it against all Impediments.

Omit no part of it thro' Fear, Idleness or Shame. Agree not to renounce any part of it to gratifie humane Usurpations; disallow those Incroachments as the worst Dilapidations; for the Lord will blame your consent to the Change of this Office. Again, declare the whole Counsel of GOD, and fully preach his Word. Administer the Sacraments, reprove Offenders, censure the Obstinate, watch for Souls, comfort the Mourner, establish the Weak, reduce them who wander, awaken the Secure, instruct the Ignorant, provide that others may succeed you in the Ministry, and be ready to encourage, and set them apart when qualified. Be employ'd in these (and whatever else belongs to your Office) as occasions offer. Whatever you wilfully neglect, therein you come short of fulfilling your Ministry.

Col. 1. 25.

A. 2.

A. 2. To perform all Ministerial Acts in the *greatest Tendency to the ends of this Office.*

No Man fulfils his Ministry, who does not his *utmost* that his Labours may *obtain* that for which Christ appointed him a Minister. You cannot be ignorant that the ends designed by this Office, are the Conversion of Sinners, and the Edification of Saints in Knowledge, Faith, Holiness and Comfort, whereby the Kingdom of Christ may be advanced to the Glory of God, the Salvation of Men, and Overthrow of Satan's Kingdom. The Lord Jesus *sends* you to serve such Purposes as these, and as these ends should be always in your *Eye*, as the Scope of your Labours; so they ought to govern and *direct* all your Labours; and you are so far wanting in fulfilling your Ministry, as you neglect to *accommodate* your Performances thereto. All your sacred Exercises are profanely defecrated, that are directed to *lower* Ends; and hypocritically and foolishly managed for the right ends, when your Consciences can tell you, this is not the *likeliest* way to reach them.

It's written of Paul and Barnabas, *they so spake, that a Multitude believed.* By doing thus, they are said to *fulfil* the Work for which they were recommended to the Grace of God. *They so spake*, i.e. with that Truth, Plainness, Warmth, Impartiality, Gravity, Authority, Importunity and Affection, as was *fitted* to bring Men, by the Blessing of GOD, to believe, and *likely* to be attended with his Blessing. Acts 14.
1, 26.

Let this be your Care, and *pray* for Wisdom to discern what particular Truth, what Arguments, what Method, what Words, and what manner of utterance are most accommodated to the spiritual Good of those you at any time preach to, *That teaching every Man in all Wisdom, you may present every Man perfect in Christ*; and dare not for Pride, Vanity or Man-pleasing, to preach otherwise; for that GOD who beholds you acting against your Convictions, will reprove you as false to your Trust in what so nearly concerneth his Glory, and the Salvation of such as hear you. With the like Faithfulness attempt and execute every other part of your Ministry, or you fulfil it not.

A. 3. To give up ones self to Ministerial Work, as ones very Business.

This Work and Preparation for it shou'd take up your time, employ your Strength, and exercise your Thoughts. *Meditate on these things, give up thy self wholly to them.* Be not needlessly diverted, and avoid Entanglement by secular Affairs. You have devoted your *whole self* to the Ministry, and it's enough to employ you to the utmost. It's impossible to perform the *whole* of its Work in a right manner, if you give not up your self *wholly* thereto: therefore resolve with the Apostles, *We will give up our selves to Prayer, and to the Ministry of the Word.* Be diligent Observers of all Opportunities, and so improve them to the height of your acquired Abilities, and superadded Assistances, that you may be able to say as Paul, *Hercunto I also labour, according to his Working, which worketh in me mightily,*

tilly. He will never fulfil his Ministry, who attends it as a thing *by the bye*, or accounts any other Employment as much his Business.

4. To render the Ministry *reputable and creditable in the Esteem of others.*

Make full Proof of thy Ministry, *πληροφάνειον*, ^{2 Tim. 4.} the Margin justly renders the Word *fulfil*, and ^{5.} the Context leads to it; *q. d.* "Hearers whose
"Ears are itching, and their Teachers who
"gratify them, will run down and expose a
"sound and faithful Ministry. *But watch thou*
"in all things to prove the Truth of it, and to
"maintain the Honour of it in the Consci-
"ences of Men. Hereby their Attempts will
soon be frustrated, and soundness of Doctrine
prevail. Therefore let us be careful by good
Arguments to defend; and by a good Tem-
per and Behaviour, with a Seemliness in our
holy Performances, and Constancy and Patience
in Afflictions, to *recommend* our Ministry as a
thing true, *perfect and Divine.*

Q. 4. What is it to *take heed to this Ministry* so as that it may be fulfilled.

A. The Word *βλέπε*, which is render'd, *Take heed* here, imports 4 things: Which with the inforcing Motives, I shall particularly direct as a *Charge* from Christ to you, *Who are now duly ordained* to this Office. May it have place in your Conscience, and there abide to influence all your Endeavours!

1. Well *understand and seriously consider this Office.*

The Word is so used, *Mat. 7. 2.* Christ calls you to behold what are the Duties, Difficul-
G 3 ties,

ties, Temptations, Helps and Encouragements belonging to the Ministry. I know you are no Stranger thereto, but you have reason to see these things *more* plainly, and *oft* to review them. If they be not well understood, or but seldom consider'd, you cannot fulfil your Ministry. For much will be over-look'd, and none so well managed. Let your Office therefore be much in your Eye. Frequently consider the Author, Nature, Duties and great Consequences of it. This you'll find very useful, to excite, support, and direct you in your Work.

2. *Awe and charge your Conscience to a serious Concern for the fulfilling of your Ministry.* Thus the Word is used, 1 Cor. 8. 9. Be not *vain* and heedless, as if there were no weight in the matter, nor danger of failing, nor of Vengeance if you fail. Let not *Levity* of Mind be indulged in any part of your Undertaking, but engage in all with solemn Reverence, and Caution; least by neglect you provoke God, endanger your self, be a Stumbling-block to others, and bring the Office into Contempt. Oft bring

2 Cor. 2. 16. your Heart to say, *Who is sufficient for these things?*

3. *Diligently use all appointed Helps, and do your utmost that your Ministry may be fulfill'd.* Look that it be so. Pray and study in order to fitness, pray for a Blessing, and as to your part see all be done, that conduceth to effect what you are sent for. Use no Delay, allow no Excuses, but look to it that this be fulfill'd. O keep that

1 Tim. 6. 20. which is committed to thy Trust. It is your Duty which must not be omitted. Neither Difficulty

ficulty nor Danger, neither Littleſſneſs nor Sloth, neither Pleaſures nor worldly Cares, neither the Frowns nor Flatteries of Men, neither the Idleneſs of other Miniſters, nor long Unprofitableneſs of your Hearers, neither your own former Labours, nor the Multitude of good Preachers or Books will give you a Diſpenſation. The Miniſtry muſt be fulfill'd on your part, being you have undertaken it.

4. *Beware of all Defects and Impediments.*

Col. 2. 8.

So the Word is uſed, *beware* leaſt any Man ſpoil you, &c. Reſt not with a leſſer Meetneſs, *but let your profiting appear to all.* If Time, ^{1 Tim. 4.} Helps and Exerciſe, contribute not to ſupply ^{15.} your preſent Defects; they'll teſtify againſt you as wickedly inſufficient. Again, beware of *Impediments*, whether they be ſuch to your *Work*, or to your *Success*; whether they be from *within*, or from *without*. Prevent as far as you can ſuch as you foreſee, thoſe which you find remove as far out of the way as you are able: Uſe great Reſolution and Wiſdom in *hindring* the ill Effects of ſuch as you cannot remove. Eſpecially look into your ſelves that your own *Luſts* be mortified, and all *Indiſpoſitions* rectified. *Beware* of what makes you backward to your Duty, ſpoils your Performances, or ſhuts out the Spirit's Aſſiſtance and Bleſſing; whether it be Sloth, Self-confidence, Unbelief, Cowardice, or any other Sin.

With holy Fear aſk often wherein am I defective; what do I omit? What do I ſlightly perform? What does moſt obſtruct the Fitneſs of my Labours, and what do hinder their Success?

Beware lest you allow any Hindrances, *tremble* lest you strengthen these, or create more. That your Ministry have Success depends on GOD. But in these four things you are to take heed to it that you fulfil it : O neglect it not.

I shall inforce this Charge with some Motives.

2 Cor. 2.
16.

Mot. 1. The fulfilling your Ministry is a *hard Work*, *Who is sufficient* ? thus it's said by an eminent Apostle. It needs Study, Pains, Resolution and Care. Serious Ministers so feel its weight, that their Sleep is oft interrupted ; and they wou'd despair but for hope of Divine Assistance. It's hard to speak with Light and Gravity, as an *Oracle* of GOD ; hard to be faithful as GOD's Steward. It's no easy thing as a Pastor to accommodate your selves for the Edification of such various Tempers ; it's hard to keep your own Spirit in a Frame suitable to your Work, and a due Concern for it.

Mot. 2. You are in great *Danger* to fail in it.

Take heed are Words of Caution, and suppose Danger, if not past Neglects : Can you doubt this ? When Satan, the World, the ill Example of unfaithful Ministers, Reproach, worldly Cares, humourfome Hearers, &c. are such *Discouragements* to the fulfilling your Ministry. You must be a Stranger to your self if you see no hazard from your own Defects and Remains of Corruptions. O take heed, for the Secure is in the greatest Danger. *Take heed to thy self* and the Ministry thou hast received.

1 Tim. 4.
16.

Mot. 3. It's the Ministry of the Lord Jesus, and from him you received it. Can you be un-

un-

unconcerned when you consider, who he is? *The Lord of Glory*, God manifest in the Flesh, ¹ Cor. 2. he that loved you, and gave himself for you: ⁸. Yea, is now your Advocate with the Father by his humane Nature, as it's united to the Divine, from whence his Merits derive their Value. Is not here enough to engage you, if *Love* has any place in your Hearts? He has all Dominion and Power, and never can leave his faithful Servants unassisted, or unrewarded: Is not this sufficient to establish you? He is holy, and will come to judge all Men without respect of Persons; Must not this *awe* you, if you are capable of holy *Fear*?

His *Purposes* by your Ministry are glorious, viz. to render Men the *Temple* of the Blessed ² Cor. 6. GOD, that he may dwell among them, be glorified in them, and they made meet to be with him for ever. What Care and Diligence become such Designs? He *enabled and accounted you faithful* in ¹ Tim. 1. putting you into the Ministry; and dare you ¹². be unfaithful, when the greatest Fidelity is supposed? he intrusted you with the Effects of his Death and Ascension too, can you betray such a *Trust* as this? To him you devoted your self, Will you be *sacrilegious*? To him you have vowed to fulfil your Ministry, take heed of *Perjury* of the worst kind.

Mot. 4. If you fulfil not your Ministry in a sincere degree, both you and many others are like to *perish eternally*.

You for being an unfaithful Steward, they for want of a faithful Ministry will die in their own Sins, but *their Blood will God require at thy* ^{Ezek. 33.} *band.* ^{8.}

hand. To meet with such in Hell must aggravate your Torments.

1 Cor. 9. 16. Rational Self-love wou'd be a means to prevent the Misery of both; O think, *Wo is me if I preach not the Gospel!*

Mat. 5. Whilst you take heed to fulfil your Ministry, you have the greatest Encouragements.

1 Cor. 3. 9. You'll find *Strength* proportioned to the Difficulties of your Work, you are a *Fellow-Worker* with him, whose Designs shall not be frustrated by all the Powers of Hell. You are likely to be honoured in begetting Souls to Christ, and saving those who shall be your *Crown of Rejoycing* in the Heavens; and not fail of endless Glory, tho your Hearers shou'd perish by their own Fault. The *special Presence of Christ is with you*, which is the surest Defence, and the richest Treasure of Light, Strength and Comfort, that you can need or ask. Consider these things when ready to faint or be remiss; by Faith realize and improve them, when you are fulfilling your Ministry in the highest, hardest and most self-denying Instances. You'll feel in them a mighty Establishing, quieting and reviving Power.

1 Thess. 3. 16.
Mat. 28. 20.

An Exhortation to the People.

You have chosen this Brother to be over you in the Lord. You are to have a peculiar Share in the Benefit of his Work and Office. His Charge you heard is strict; but have you no Duty on your part towards him? You have, and have

have great Reason to take heed that you *fulfil* it. Therefore,

1. See that *you enable him* what you can to discharge his Trust. To this end *pray* for him, *provide* competently for him, which is a *Debt*, ^{2 Theff. 3.} and not your *Gift*. Advise him privately when ^{1.} he is blamable; acquaint him with the State of ^{1 Cor. 9.} your Souls as far as is necessary to direct his ^{14.} Ministry for your Benefit, defend him when injured, &c. prepare your Families by private Instruction for Publick Ordinances; this will turn to your own account, as qualifying him for the better serving of Christ among you.

2. Admit him to perform his *whole Work* in the *aptest manner*.

Quarrel not with the Truths he sees most necessary for you to hear, allow him to warn the Secure, and search the Self-deceived, as well as to comfort the Upright. You'll be in danger if you bid him speak *smooth things*. ^{Isa. 30.} Shew ^{10.} the *Truth* of your own Grace, by liking to hear Sermons tending to *convert* Sinners, as well as those which build up Saints in Knowledge. Favour not Licentiousness by a Dislike of having *Duties* urged, least your right to *Privileges* become doubtful; both must have their place, the first to clear your Interest in the last, by walking worthy of them; the last to incline you to the first, that your Walk may be *comfortable* as well as holy. Tempt him not to become *unuseful* to *most*, by your Disgust of solid Matter in a grave tho plain Stile. Receive his private Reproofs without anger, encroach
not

not on his Office, but submit to him as one ruling over you by Christ's Authority.

3. Be careful that the *ends* of his faithful Ministry *be attained* among you.

Take heed that none of you remain unconverted under the Calls of Christ in his Ministry, nor unedified by his Endeavours to promote Knowledge, Faith, Holiness and Joy. See that he may give an account of you with Joy and not with Grief, for that will be *unprofitable to you*; more so to *you* than him, for if he be faithful he will be a sweet Savour to GOD, even in them that perish, and his Reward is with the Lord, tho as to you his Labour should prove in vain. It highly concerns you to take heed after the faithful Labours of your late *eminent Pastor*, and the great prospect you have of the same in him; who at present is entred into that Office and Relation. Your Improvements will encourage and enlarge his Heart, secure you from Divisions, make you exemplary to Neighbours, and give comfortable Reviews when you part in this World, and meet in that which is unchangeable.

Heb. 13.
17.

Mr. Syl-
vester.

1 AP 57

FINIS.

A
CONFESSION
OF
FAITH,

Deliver'd at the
ORDINATION, &c.

By B. GRAYE, D. D. R.



1 Pet. 3. 15. *Be ready always to give an Answer to every Man that asketh you a Reason of the Hope that is in you, with Meekness and Fear.*

The first Apologists for Christianity, when they deliver a short Abstract of the Christian Faith, do all vary from one another, both as to the Order, and as to the Words themselves; which they would not have done if the Churches had all receiv'd one settled Form from the Apostles.

Bishop Burnet's Exp. of the 39th Art.

THE PREFACE.

THE Bible is the Religion of Protestants, that's the Form of Sound Words which in such Seasons and Portions as 'twas written was deliver'd to the Saints. All other Forms are no further Sacred to us, than as they lead us into the Sense, and present us with some Scheme of Scripture-Religion, and the setting up any other Forms as the Standard of Truth, is not only departing from the Simplicity of the Gospel, but opposing it. 'Twas this by degrees brought in Popery, and still maintains it. It was but getting a Majority to Vote the Rest incapable of understanding the Scripture for themselves, and the next thing of course is, an infallible Judge, and an Inquisition. For my own part, I think any Man may as well pretend to make a New Bible for me, as to force upon me his Sense of it; whether I can possibly discern it after all means used or no; and that not by showing me a Scripture-Reason, but a Fagot or a Prison.

I say this on purpose to declare that I am a Christian, that is, one who calls no Man Master but Christ Jesus. Next to the Name of Christian, indeed, I profess to glory in that of a Protestant, that is, one who Protests against the Imposition of any other invariable, infallible Rules of Faith and Practice than the Word of God.

By this you see under what Notion this Confession comes into your Hands, as a Comment upon the Scripture, and an help to understand it, and is to recommend it self to you only upon the Force of its being agreeable to the Rule you acknowledge, and for the same Reason I make no Scruple to declare, that I do not subscribe this Formula with a *fic sentio sic sentiam*, as if resolv'd to be no wiser after more Reading, Prayer and Study; but shall be ready to embrace any Information, and make any Alterations I see Cause for, either in Method, Matter, or Phrase, as becomes one who acknowledges He sees but in Part.

I aim'd at something of a Thread, and a sprinkling of Argument; this has occasion'd some Disproportion in the Articles, and the dropping the Quotations, which any Christian may easily supply; it may be of some Use to view the same Truths in a different Light and Position. I conclude with an honest Saying of St. Austin's I have read somewhere, *Dicam ego quod sentio, dicant forte meliora Doctiores.*

A
CONFESSIO
N
O F
F A I T H

Deliver'd at the

ORDINATION, &c.

I. **I** BELIEVE the Existence of
ONE SUPREME BEING,
substantially differing from the
Universe, which He made and go-
vern. Without WHOM it was utter-
ly as impossible for *any thing to be*, as for a
Second or *Third* to be without a *First*; or
for any thing to be and not to be at the
same time: Either of which is as easy to
conceive, as it is, How any thing at all
should be without a *First Being*.

II. NE-

II. NECESSARY Existence must be an inseparable Perfection of this First Being, because nothing can *give a Being to it self* ; nor can the first Being *receive it* from any other : And therefore must have been from everlasting. This necessary Existence is that ABSOLUTE ETERNITY, which we ascribe only to God, who may therefore well be said to *inhabit Eternity, and to be from everlasting to everlasting God.*

III. HE that gave Being and Perfections to all Things, must have in Himself all possible Perfections, and can want nothing that we count Perfection in a Creature, but what 'tis a Perfection not to be capable of. Such a Nature must be infinitely remote from all Weakness, Mixture, Limitation or Stintedness in Being, Power or Knowledge, &c. All which Imperfections we remove from our Notion of God by ascribing to Him, Spirituality, Simplicity, Unchangeableness, Omnipotence, Omniscience, Holiness, Wisdom, Justice, Goodness and Truth, and that He is Infinite in all. This is the Being we call G O D ; these are the Syllables that compose his G R E A T N A M E ; these are the Attributes that give Him
an

an absolute Sovereignty over us, and entitle Him to our Adoration.

IV. THE Understanding of such a Being as this, only knows his *infinite Self*, and only can comprehend with one View all *Possibles* in Nature, and all *Futurities* in their Order, and all *Effects* in their Causes; and does at one Glance strike through all the long Train of Cause and Effect, and what they would be in their natural Course and Connexion. This is a Perfection co-existent with his Being, and therefore from Eternity so wise a Being would determine or decree, what He would do, what He would suffer to be done, what He will over-rule, and what He will leave to the natural Course and Causality of things. *Known unto Him are all his Works from the Beginning to the End; He hath determin'd the End from the Beginning, saying, my Counsel shall stand, and I will do all my Pleasure.*

V. IT's below such a GOD to make any thing his End but his own Glory. 'Twas for the Manifestaion of that Glory that He gave Being to all we see. The Fabrick, Furniture, Contrivance, Beauty, and Inhabitants of the Visible World show his eternal Power and God-head in Making; *his Wisdom and Goodness* in Managing, Preserving,

serving, and Governing all things, shows his *Providence* over it; which so wise and good a Being must needs be believ'd to exercise, since no Person of common Sense builds a goodly and convenient Structure, but will, if he be able, keep it in Repair and good Order.

VI. GOD has an indispensable Right of governing the Creatures He has made, according to their several Natures. And *Man* being a Creature not only of wonderful Contrivance and artful Composition of Body, but of noble and large Capacity of Mind, in his Understanding, Will, and Affections, capable of knowing, loving, serving, and enjoying God, is therefore a fit Subject of rational and moral Government.

VII. THIS Subjection and Obedience of his Rational Creatures is what this Sovereign can no more dispense with than he can deny himself, nor can we withhold it from *him* to whom we owe our very Being, without forfeiting our all, and violating Obligations, that are infinitely greater than those of Subjects to the best of Princes, Servants to the best of Masters, or Children to the best of Parents: I conclude therefore that I owe universal Obedience to his Will whensoever 'tis made known.

VIII.

VIII. THE Will of this Sovereign has been made known, partly by the *Light of Nature* and Reason, but most fully, to all the Purposes of his Honour, and our Happiness, by *Scripture-Revelation*; and tho the Scripture calls that natural Reason, *the Law written in the Heart*, by which they were a *Law unto themselves*; and pronounces *them inexcusable* for not *glorifying God*, in proportion to the Discovery which that Light made of his Nature and Will; yet for such a Knowledge of what God is, and requires, as is necessary to the Happiness of such as we are, we must go to that Book which He has order'd to be written on purpose, call'd the *Bible*, or *Scripture-Revelation*: WRITINGS that have all the Proof that the Case requires, that they do as truly belong to the Divine Author, whose Name they bear, as any Works can have; that they are indeed the Works of *Him* to whom they are ascrib'd. They have been accordingly receiv'd by the respective Churches (*Jewish and Christian*) as they were from time to time consign'd to writing, as *the Oracles of God*; at those very times, when, if 'twere possible, it was easy to have confuted those high Pretences. The very *Doubting* of some of

the Books of the present *Canon*, demonstrates the *undoubted* Divinity of the rest; and the admitting *those* after their Authors were known, establishes their equal Credit and divine Authority: And these Books being constantly *appeal'd* on all Sides of Christians, and oppos'd by Enemies, as the known Rules of Faith and Practice, and by the Christian Church deliver'd down to us, by constant and universal Tradition; and we our selves, considering the Characters, Quality, and Distance of the Writers, and the Nature of the Doctrine, Manner of Speaking, the Tendency and Harmony of the Whole, the Effects of it upon the Hearts of Men, the Accomplishment of Prophecies, the Attestation of Miracles; we at this Distance, I say, considering these things, have Reason to conclude the Scriptures to be the Word of God.

IX. THESE Scriptures do more perfectly and clearly repeat and teach all that which the Light of natural Reason and Conscience discovers, of the Being, Nature and Perfections, Creation, Providence and Government of God.

X. I believe therefore, according to the Scripture-Revelation, that in the Deity or God-head there is the *Father, Son and Holy*

Holy Ghost, and that these Three are One, the same in Substance, equal in Power and Glory. And these I find in Scripture frequently spoken of in such Terms as we ordinarily use when we speak of three Persons, and that all Three are made the Object of Worship, and have divine Perfections ascrib'd, and Personal Properties, Actions, and Characters. And that Persons are commanded to be baptiz'd in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. I believe *Their* Difference, whatever it is, is certainly agreeable to *Their* Unity, and *Their* Unity consistent with their *Trinity*; because God has given such an Account of Himself in Words so plain to this Sense, that however some Scriptures, that are with more Zeal and Fancy than Solidity, brought to maintain this Truth, may be answer'd, yet there is so great a Number of Texts so express, that I cannot force upon them another Sense without Strain and Prevarication. In this Article God challenges the Honour of being believed upon his bare *Word*, without that *Evidence* in the Nature of the Thing, which 'tis an Affront to the divine Veracity always to make the Condition of my Assent; and provided I have Evidence of the divine Testi-

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mony, I may as well disbelieve Him when He says *I am*, because I can't fathom *what*, as when he says that these *Three are One* because I can't tell *how*; the Scripture it self not having offer'd to explain, tho it asserts the Mystery; but does declare, *That none by Searching can find out God, none can find out the Almighty unto Perfection.* Consequently something must unavoidably be acknowledged, in the divine Nature, an Object of my meer Faith, at the same time that I cannot have an Idea of it, because 'tis declar'd, *none can by Searching find it out.*

Dr. Bates
Harm.

XI. THIS God who is the living Fountain of all Perfections, enjoyed an Eternity in the Contemplation of his own Excellencies, before any Creature was made. In the Moment appointed by his Wisdom, He gave the *First Being* to the World three distinct Orders of Natures, He form'd, the one purely *spiritual*, the other purely *material*; and between both one *mixt*, which unites the Extreains in its self. This is *Man*; the Abridgment of the Universe, ally'd to Angels in his Soul, and to material Things in his Body, and capable of the Happiness of both. By his *Internal* Faculty enjoying the Felicity of the *Intellectual*,

telleſtual, and by his *external*, Taſting the Pleaſures of the *ſenſitive* World. Man's greateſt Excellency was a perfect Conformity to the Divine Pattern, *In the Image of God created he them Male and Female.*

XII. THESE Persons, our Firſt Parents, were made under the Law of Creation, and ought to have continued not only in the *Innocence* of doing no Evil; but in the *Righteouſneſs* of performing whatſoever God had commanded them.

XIII. TO this Law God was pleas'd to add a Threatning, and an implied Promise; and thereby form'd it into a Covenant of Life, upon Condition above-hinted, *viz.* perfect and perſonal Obedience. To the Trial of this Obedience he immediately brought 'em by one poſitive Command, of abſtaining from the Fruit of only one certain Tree in that Lovely Garden, which from the *Effects*, forbidden Pleaſure, or abſtaining, was call'd the *Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil*; tempted by an Apoſtate Angel, who had fallen before from his own Happineſs; and therefore now envious of Man's, and inveterate againſt God's Honour, they fell *from the State* wherein they were created, they are turn'd out of Paradise,

radise, and the utter Impossibility of being sav'd by that Covenant, was represented, by placing a Guard of *Cherubims*, and who as Ministers of Justice are represented, brandishing a *Flaming Sword* *this way and that way, to keep the Way of the Tree of Life.*

XIV. *I Believe that by the Disobedience of this one Man, many were made Sinners, and as by one Man Sin enter'd into the World, and Death by Sin, so Death passed upon all Men; for that all have sinned and fallen short of the Glory of God; and that by the Offence of one, Judgment came upon all Men to Condemnation, and that in Adam all die, as in Christ shall all be made alive. And since by his Sin the Spirit of God was forfeited away from himself and Posterity, who is the Fountain of Holiness, and the whole Crasis of his Body vitiated and disorder'd, an habitual Pravity, a great Number of irregular bodily Appetites and Propensions must needs follow: All which he naturally communicates to his Offspring, who are therefore after the Fall said to be begat in the Image of Adam, tho Adam was made in the Image of God.*

In this natural State, the World is not only guilty before God, and so condemn'd

demn'd to Hell, but so *corrupted* as to be utterly unfit for Heaven.

XV. SALVATION from this miserable and sinful State, must be now of Free Grace, and the Way of it a Matter of pure Revelation. This new Way was first open'd in the Promise made to our first Parents in Paradise, when God said, *The Seed of the Woman should break the Serpent's Head.* This was the *first Gospel*, and God himself the *first Preacher* of it. The whole Bible is in effect this one Promise drawn out at length, and gradually inlightned and explain'd, according to the several Editions of the Covenant of Grace in Christ Jesus. The different Ages of the Church, and Measures of Light, discovering *Salvation by Grace*, still growing brighter and brighter, the nearer it drew to the Rising of the *Sun of Righteousness*, and the *Day-star from on high*, which hath *visited us* with so full a Promulgation of the Covenant of Grace, as makes this Dispensation of it by Christ emphatically call'd, THE GOSPEL, (*i. e.*) glad Tidings in his Mission, Doctrine, Life and Death. The History of which, together with the other Apostolical Writing, compleat that Revelation,

velation, which is the *Canon* or Rule of our Faith and Obedience.

XVI. BY this Light we know, that God the Father, whose Property it is to be consider'd as the Fountain of the Trinity, out of his eternal Good Will, and for his own Glory, designing to save Mankind from that State into which he foresaw they would fall, did agree to accept the offer'd Satisfaction of Christ the Second Person, whom by the same Agreement He freely gave out of his Bosom, in the *Covenant of Redemption, and of Peace that was between them both.* That if he would pour out his Soul unto the Death, he should see of the Travail of his Soul, and be satisfied. God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, &c.

XVII. THE Eternal Son of God being (as God) of equal Dignity and Majesty with the Father, being also perfectly at his own Disposal and Power, as such, was therefore able of himself to give, in full, all that which the Honour, Majesty and Justice of the Governour of the World, could insist on as a Reparation. The Honours done to the Divine Government by the Sufferings of such a Person, absolutely removes the Affront offer'd
by

by the offending Creature, and not only so, but with infinite Merit and Advantage, beyond the Punctilio of meer Satisfaction, has done an infinite Honour to the same Governour and Government, which neither our perfect Innocence, nor eternal Sufferings could have done.

XVIII. BUT this was what a meer Man could not do, nor could one that was only God suffer at all; and therefore he must be both God and Man, who was to be *Mediator between God and Man*. In order to this he assumed our Nature, prepar'd for Him by the *Power of the Holy Ghost*, into a Personal Union with himself, and the Scriptures do speak so many things, that cannot be said with Sense and Propriety, of any, but of one who is *true God*; and withal in so abundant a manner, gives Proof of his being *truly Man*, that I must believe, he was true God and Man perfectly (tho after an incomprehensible manner) united; in *two distinct Natures, but one Person for ever*.

XIX. In discharging the General Office of Mediator, he executes the particular Offices of Prophet, Priest and King.

He is our *Prophet* and infallible Teacher, to declare unto the Church in all Ages by his Word, the Will and Way of God,
for

for our Salvation. This he did in the Beginning of the World, *at sundry times, and in divers manners*, at length in his own Person ; afterward by his Apostles sent by him ; and now by Pastors, Teachers of the Word, whom he raiseth up in all Ages for that purpose.

As a *Priest*, by this Sacrifice once for all, he has satisfy'd Divine Justice, made Reconciliation between God and Man, taken away Sin, and brought in everlasting Righteousness ; and by continual Intercession claims for us the Benefits of his Redemption. And upon this alone it is that I depend for Recommendation and Acceptance in my coming to God.

I own him also for my Law-giver, *King and Governour* ; and adore his Authority and Power in the illustrious Instances of it, subduing my own Heart to himself by his Grace, restraining, conquering the World, and his Enemies, by his Power, protecting and defending, and at last saving his People, and bestowing as a King what he hath purchas'd as a Priest. In all this, filling up the Character of the *second Adam*, in the Redemption of all those that are *spiritually* related to him as their Head, from all, wherein they were involv'd by their *Natural Relation* to the

First

First Adam; as the Apostle largely runs the Parallel, *Rom.*

XX. I BELIEVE, that by the Merit, of his Obedience and Sufferings, he has *all Power in Heaven and in Earth given unto him*; and consequently is supreme Head of the Church. He only has Authority to appoint Ordinances and Administrations, and to settle the Terms of Communion with his Church here, and of Salvation hereafter. All which are finally put into his Hand, and he having stated them in his Word, there are none in Heaven nor Earth, have any Authority to add to them, or subtract from them.

XXI. BEING the Mediator of the Covenant of Grace, and having all Power, he had Authority to make what Alterations in its Administration, that he should see most agreeable to his new Dispensation of it. That Covenant of Grace which in former times was administered by Prophecies, Types and Ceremonies, Circumcision and Passover, he is now pleas'd to carry on by Prayer and Preaching, Reading the Scriptures, and Singing Psalms, and the two solemn Ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, to be as the Seals of the New Covenant, and Pledges
of

of his Love, and to be of perpetual Use
until he come.

XXII. F O R the administring of these Ordinances, and for the offering Salvation upon the Terms of the Gospel, He has appointed a distinct Order of Men to be ordained as his Ministers and Servants, and *Stewards of the Household of God.* Who are to *give themselves to the Word and Prayer.* And the Design of their Work, the *Extent* of their Office, their *Qualifications*, and Furniture for the Work, the Duty and Obligations of the People towards them, the *distinguishing Characters* under which their Office is describ'd as *Shepherds, Stewards, Overseers, or Bishops, &c.* are all so expressly laid down in Scripture, that I can't but conclude, 'twas the Design of Christ to have a Succession of such Officers maintained, substituting one in the room of another (as thro' the rich Mercy and Goodness of God it is at this Day) after such manner as the Apostles have left us in Pattern: *Viz.* After the Persons, Qualifications, and Furniture, have been approv'd by capable Judges, and his own inward Inclinations and Designs, devoting himself to that Office, seriously profess'd, he is to be solemnly set apart by Fasting and Prayer,

er, and the Imposition of the Hands of the Presbytery. This is the *Ordination* to the Ministry which the Scripture knows any thing of, and these I take to be those Successors to the Apostles, for whom our Lord design'd the Encouragement of that Promise, *Lo I am with you always unto the End of the World.*

XXIII. WHEN He had settled the Affairs of his Church thus far, and given them Assurance that what remain'd should be infallibly taught them by that Holy Spirit he would send down, *who should lead them into all Truth*, and had frequently convers'd with His Disciples, He was taken up into Heaven in their sight. So that as he lived our *Example*, and died our *Sacrifice* of Propitiation, He rose a *Conqueror* of Death, Hell and the Grave, ascended in Triumph to the Right Hand of God in the highest Heavens, which *must continue until the Restitution of all things.*

XXIV. Upon his *Ascension* came down the Blessed Spirit, as the heavenly *Donative*, scattered abroad at the Triumphs of our ascending Conqueror, and a Proof of his having wrought *Eternal Redemption*, by restoring that Spirit; which as it was the great Blessing forfeited by
Adam,

Adam, whereby he became a meer *animal Man*, *not having the Spirit*, so the Recovery of it for us was the great Business of the second *Adam*, who is therefore called a quickening Spirit. This was the great Promise of the New Testament, as Christ himself was of the Old. And tho this Holy Spirit, consider'd as *God*, cannot be purchas'd : Yet consider'd as a *Gift to us*, and the giving His Presence as our Restoration to a Blessing forfeited, 'tis owing to the Merits of Jesus Christ, and his perfect Accomplishment of all the Requisites of the Covenant of Redemption. By this Blessed Spirit He carries on the Work of Redemption *in us*, as by what he Himself did and suffer'd, he carried it on *without us*, and *for us*. Having paid the Price, he goes up to Heaven to prepare *it* for us, and sends down the Spirit to prepare *us* for Heaven ; which as 'tis a Matter of admirable Grace, so 'tis a Business of as absolute Necessity, that we should by the Spirit of God be fitted for Heaven, as that Heaven should by Jesus Christ be purchas'd and prepared for us.

XXV. I BELIEVE therefore the absolute Necessity of a Change of State, of Heart and Life ; which is the Work of this

this Blessed Spirit, and what he has undertaken to manage in all the Heirs of Salvation, under the Titles of a *Convincer* of the World of *Sin, Righteousness, and Judgment*; of a *Guide* into all necessary Truth; and of a *Comforter* and *Sanctifier*, and an inward *Intercessor*. And by these his inward Operations does apply the Redemption wrought out by Christ, and personally entitles us to, and makes us capable of that Inheritance of which he is the *Earnest* and Assurance.

XXVI. THE Method he ordinarily uses is the Word of God, whereby he opens the Understanding of those *who were sometime Darkness*. This is frequently called, *opening the blind Eye*; because now, first, they see the Sinfulness and Misery of their natural State, the Evil of Sin, as 'tis odious to God, as 'tis base Ingratitude to our best Friend and Benefactor, and as 'tis destructive to our own Souls, by exposing us to the Wrath of God, which is revealed from Heaven against all *Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men*. Hence follows Grief for Sin, and Hatred of it, which show themselves to be unfeigned, by their turning the Soul from Sin in Heart and Life unto God, and Christ, and true Holiness. Unto God as my last
I End,

End, my sovereign Lord to be obey'd, my most excellent Portion to be enjoy'd; and this is called Repentance toward God: Un- to Christ, as my Way to the Father, my Advocate with him, my only Foundation of Acceptance, and my only Plea with him for escaping Wrath to come, and the Sentence of a broken Law: This is called Faith in Jesus Christ; which includes in it, in order to make it a saving Faith, an hearty Assent of Understanding to all Reveal'd Truth, upon the Credit of the Divine Testimony, where-ever I can discern it; whereby I receive Christ for my Prophet. A sincere Consent of Will to all known Duty, having Respect to all God's Commands, and a letting go our own Will and Affections, and resigning them to his Government; and hereby we take him to be our Lord and King. And further, an entire Reliance upon Christ, and him only, in the Practice of the two former, whereby I take him for my Priest; and therefore I conclude, that where either of these is wanting, there is no saving Faith, because there is not whole Christ received in all his Offices. And that tho in Scripture one of these singly is called Faith, yet 'tis upon Supposition of its being accompany'd with the other, as
it

it certainly will be where either of them are genuine ; since the precise and complete Notion of Faith can't consist in a single Branch of it, but in the whole taken together ; and as such is therefore to be preach'd and practis'd.

XXVII. THIS is that Faith to which the Gospel-Constitution does annex and promise the great Privilege of *Justification*, whereby he pardons all our Sin, and graciously discharges us from the Condemnation of a broken Law, and accepts and treats us as righteous Persons, for the Sake of Christ's Satisfaction and Righteousness, believed in and depended upon ; *Blessed is the Man to whom the Lord imputeth Righteousness without Works*, Rom. 5. 18, 19. 'Tis of the very Essence of this Faith to lead the Soul to quit all Pretensions of being justify'd by any Righteousness of our own ; and 'tis equally essential to it, to make the Soul despair of being justify'd by any Righteousness without Faith and Repentance, the agreed Terms, upon which alone the Benefits of Christ's Satisfaction can possibly be ours.

XXVIII. INSEPARABLE from this is the Privilege of *Adoption*, having received the Spirit of Sons, whereby we cry, *Abba Father* ; and are thereby united to that

Body of the Church, whereof Christ is the Head.

XXIX. AND as the Blessed Spirit thus changes our *State*, and translates us into a new Relation, he carries on the same Salvation, by changing our *Nature*, and thereby fitting us for Heaven in the progressive Work of Sanctification ; destroying the Dominion of Sin, weakning its Power and Interest, strengthening and quickening our Graces, to the performing new Obedience, and to a persevering *Continuance in well doing*, and the Practice of true Holiness, *without which no Man shall see the Lord.*

XXX. THOSE whom *Death* finds in this Condition, it immediately transmits into a State where this Holiness is perfect. For that the Souls of Men, immediately upon their Separation from the Body, do not sink into a State of Insensibility, to me seems plain, from the Apostle's desiring to be *absent from the Body, for the sake of being present with the Lord* ; and present in such a sense as he declar'd to be *far better*. And also from the Words of Christ to the Thief upon the Cross, *that this day he should be with him in Paradise* ; and from the Parable of *Dives and Lazarus*, and other Passages in Scripture.

XXXI. UPON the Dissolution of the
Body,

Body, it is not thrown away, but laid up by Funeral Solemnity, whereby we express the Hope and Belief of that which the Scriptures abundantly testify, its *Resurrection* at the last Day, by the Power of God. When Soul and Body being united, shall be placed before the Bar of God, at which the whole World shall be judged, *according to the Deeds done in this State, whether good or evil.* Of which Judgment the Scripture gives a most awful, particular and majestic Account; and the whole Process finishing upon these Sentences of, *Go ye Cursed, and come ye Blessed,* it shall consign the two Divisions of the World to their eternal Abode. To those on the *left Hand*, that stand miserably expecting all that can be added of Wretchedness to those who already find themselves abhor'd by the best of Beings, shall he say, *Depart ye Cursed into everlasting Flames, prepar'd for the Devil and his Angels; and these shall go away into everlasting Shame.* But the Righteous, who on the right Hand stand as the Favourites of the great Judge, shining in *Bodies made like unto his own glorious Body*, and rejoicing in Soul, because the *Day of their Redemption is fully come*, triumphing for ever over all Sin and Sorrow, Death and Mortality being *swallowed up of Life*, all Labours

recompens'd, all Desires fill'd up, all Hopes accomplish'd, all Expectations infinitely out-done, and Wishes themselves for ever left behind ; the Body of Christ compleated, and got together, with himself at the Head of them, all the Designs of God fulfill'd, and all his Attributes shining out, to make a bright Day of it indeed : A Day worthy of the *King, eternal, immortal,* worthy the glorious *Marriage of the Lamb,* worthy of an Occasion wherein Heaven professes to do its *utmost* ; worthy of his Design of being *glorify'd in all his Saints, and admired in them that believe.* Worthy the solemn Coronation of all his Redeem'd, to which, placing himself at their Head, he shall lead them up thro' the bright Region of the Air towards the highest Heavens, while *they* make Heaven ring with their joyful Acclamations, *He* welcomes them to their Thrones, with *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World.*

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A
CONFESSION
OF
FAITH,

Made at his
ORDINATION
TO THE
MINISTRY,

April the 15th, 1708.

By SAMUEL WRIGHT.

Mark IX. 24.—*Lord I believe ; help thou
mine Unbelief.*

Advertisement.

THE Reading of what has gone before will sufficiently Apologize for the publishing of what follows. It has not been so much my Design to advance any things singular, as to speak what I am best satisfied with, in common with others, who have born the same Publick Testimony to these Truths, on the like Occasions. Something of a different Method and Connexion of Things I have aimed at; which tho it should be less pleasing to some, yet I promise my self it will be more agreeable and intelligible to others. And as for those who may think in a different Way and Scheme, I am so far from determining against them, that if they will but allow me time for farther Reading, and Thinking, I may perhaps see fit to alter all that is at present distasteful even to them. I have faithfully transcribed this Confession as it was delivered, without any Enlargement or Alterations; and as I here give an account of what I believe, so I shall make it my Business in the Course of my Ministry to show why I believe these things.



A CONFESSION OF FAITH.

INTRODUCTION.

AS I find in my self, so I conclude there are in all Men natural *Inclinations* to whatever appears *Good*; and irreconcilable *Aversions* to what is apparently *Evil*: Yet nothing is more evident than our own Inability, either to obtain the Good we desire, or avoid the Evil we dread. Upon Experience and Conviction of this, *Reason* teaches me to own a *Power* above *Man's*, which over-rules and manages all human Affairs; consequently a *Power* that can make me *happy* or *miserable*: this *invisible Manager* natural Light instructs

structs me to *fear and revere* ; to *betake* my self to, in all times of *Danger and Distress* ; and to do what I think most likely to secure the favourable *Influence and Assistances* of, in all my *Undertakings* : But satisfactorily to tell what sort of a *Being* that is, which has such a *Dominion and Superiority* ; and how I may do those things which *shall always please him*, I am convinced the meer *Light of Nature* is insufficient for.

I.

THO the *invisible things* of a *SUPREME CAUSE* from the *Creation of the World* are clearly seen, being *understood by the things that are made* ; even his *eternal Power and Godhead* ; so as to leave all without excuse who are *unmindful of, and unthankful* for his common *Favours and Benefits* ; yet I believe the *fallen World*, by all the *Wisdom* it could arrive at without *supernatural Illuminations*, *knew not God* ; nor could acquire a saving *Acquaintance* with the *Truths of Religion*.

II.

I BELIEVE this *BEING*, in great *Compassion* to the miserable blind *State of Mankind*, did *reveal himself* and all those things that are needful to direct

direct and guide us in the true way to Happiness. This he did by *extraordinary Messengers*, sent immediately from himself, who spake as they were moved and directed by him.

III.

I BELIEVE the *Scriptures* of the Old and New Testament were thus given by *Inspiration* from Heaven; and I receive all that as infallible Truth, which is there delivered by *Moses* and the *Prophets* in former times; by *Christ* and his *Apostles* in these latter Days. This *Book* made up of the Discourses and Writings of these Persons, I believe to be so perfect a *Rule* both of *Faith* and *Practice*; so full an account of all things that are necessary to be *known* or *done*, as not to stand in need of any additional Helps either from *Antient Traditions*, or *New Revelations*.

IV.

I BELIEVE all that is said of the *Nature* and *Perfection* of GOD, That He is a Being uncompounded, incorporeal, which we call *Spirit*; whom *no Man hath seen nor can see*; That he is Infinite, Imense, Eternal, and necessarily Existent; the *only living and true God*. I believe him to be *Omniscient*; perfectly comprehend-
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ing all things existing, or possible ; which have been, or shall be ; which might have been, or may be ; and that he *Wills* freely, immutably, and efficaciously whatever seems good to him. This Supreme Being possesses in the most eminent and highest Degree all those *Excellencies*, which are *ascribed to Man* ; and so he is most Good, Gracious and Merciful ; most Just, True, and Faithful ; most Patient, Long-suffering and Kind ; most Wise, most Holy, most Powerful, most Blessed and Happy. It is also undoubted, that whatever *Imperfections* I see in my *self* ought to be denied of *Him*, that he is Impassible, Unchangeable, Independent ; the first Cause, and the last End of all things : The GOD of Nature, Grace and Glory.

V.

I BELIEVE what the Scripture has revealed to me concerning his eternal *Purposes* and *Decrees*, that he did from everlasting ordain and determine the coming to pass of all things which he has effected, or will effect : As also what he would leave to be done by *second Causes*, and how far he would over-rule their Course and Motions : *Declaring the End from the Beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done* : Saying, My Counsel shall

shall stand, and I will do all my Pleasure.

VI.

I BELIEVE also what the Word of God relates concerning the *Creation* of all things according to the Model in the Divine Mind ; that in their exact Agreement to this all was very good. By his Word he formed the *Heaven* and the *Earth* : *HEAVEN* with its glorious Inhabitants, who are Spirits by Nature, Angels by Office ; some of which rebelling against the Orders and Commands of *GOD*, fell from their first Station, and are reserved in Chains of Darkness, to the Judgment of the Great Day. I believe that by a Word the *Earth* too was made, and the Fulness thereof ; where *MAN* was placed above all other Creatures as most resembling his Maker, and most capable of Ruling over such a World of Beings.

VII.

I BELIEVE *GOD* did not abandon his Creatures, as soon as he had made them ; but that he ever had, still has, and always will have, a *Providential Influence* over them ; in governing, superintending and managing all things concerning them, to subserve his own wise Ends and Designs.

VIII.

VIII.

I BELIEVE GOD's GOVERNMENT of MAN to be suited more peculiarly to his *Rational* Nature and Faculty; that therefore he gave him a LAW, and besides the *Obligations of his Creation*; which were sufficient to claim universal Obedience, and intire Devotedness to the Service of him who gave him his Being: Besides this, I say, God enter'd into a COVENANT with our *first Parents*, upon performing or breaking the Conditions of which *Life and Death* depended. I believe thro' the subtle Insinuations of one of the *Apostate Angels*, being left to the Determination of his own *Will*, Man *violated*, and broke his *Contract* with GOD; and so became a Child of the Devil, an Heir of Wrath, and fell under a Sentence of Condemnation: This *Sentence*, for any thing the Offender was capable of doing, must have *taken place* immediately, if God had not out of meer *free and self-moving Grace* found out a way whereby the *Execution* might be *in part* suspended; still *securing* his own *Honour*, and the *Authority* of his *Law*.

IX.

IX.

I BELIEVE that *Adam* having thus sinned, as he was the common *Root* and *Father of Mankind*; so he brought all who descended from him in an ordinary way into the same *Condemnation* with himself: And instead of propagating a *holy Nature*, which, continuing *upright*, he would have done, has convey'd an *impure, sinful* one to all his *Posterity*.

X.

I BELIEVE that the only appointed Way for the Restoration, and Recovery of Men out of this miserable, dismal State, was immediately publish'd after the Fall, in that Promise, *The Seed of the Woman shall bruise the Serpent's Head*. This was more largely drawn out in the Types, Figures, and Prophecies of the *Jewish Dispensation*; but in these latter Days has been fully accomplished, and explain'd in our LORD JESUS CHRIST. For,

XI.

I BELIEVE this is the Person concerning whom all these things are spoken, and in whom they did concenter and terminate; that *whosoever believes in him shall not perish, but have everlasting Life*.

XII.

XII.

I BELIEVE, as most clearly manifest in the *Work of our Redemption*, that there are THREE PERSONS in the GODHEAD; distinct in their *Personal Properties*, but the same in all *glorious Perfections*; each of them GOD, yet all but one GOD.

XIII.

I BELIEVE the FATHER and the SON from Eternity agreed upon *Articles*, or *Propositions*, every way becoming the infinite Perfections of the Divine Nature, whereby to effect and bring about the Salvation of a certain Number of Men.

XIV.

WHEN the set time was come for fulfilling the *Conditions* of that *Federal Agreement* on the SON's Part; I believe he assumed *our Nature*, was conceived in the *Virgin Mary*, by the immediate Operation of the *Holy Ghost*, and so born without Sin; taking upon him the Name of JESUS.

XV.

I BELIEVE that after his *Incar-nation* he still remained to be GOD, yet was really and truly MAN, and in both Natures but one Person; so becoming

ing a most proper *MEDIATOR*,
to transact Affairs betwixt *G O D* and
us.

XVI.

I BELIEVE this *Word made Flesh*
dwelt among us; that he was made under
the *Law*, both Ceremonial and Moral;
perfectly obeying the latter, and wholly
abolishing the former: His *Life* was a
most exact Pattern of Holiness: His *Do-*
ctrine such as never Man spake: His
Miracles beyond what had ever been
heard of from the Beginning of the World.
I believe, as he was sent to be a *Prophet* to
teach us; so he was constituted a *King* to
govern us; and was made a *Priest*, to
satisfy for our Crimes, and sanctify us by
the Sacrifice of himself, first offered here
below, then pleaded above in the Holy of
Holies.

XVII.

I BELIEVE, when he hung upon
the *Cross* without the *Gate of Jerusalem*,
that he bore our Sins in his own Body;
who being *G O D* as well as *M A N*, his
Sufferings alone were sufficient to an-
swer for the Sins of the *World*; and tho
but *temporal*, to counterpoise *eternal*. I
believe that by the Force and Extremity
of those Torments he endured, his Soul

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was actually *separated* from his *Body*: that going to the World of Souls; this buried in the Earth for a time.

XVIII.

I BELIEVE it was not possible he should be holden of Death so long as to see Corruption; but that he *rose from the Dead the third Day*, in a very glorious, triumphant manner; and thereby has *consecrated that Day of the Week*, on which he rose, to be constantly observed in a *religious manner*, by all that profess themselves *Christians*, as long as Days and Weeks shall endure.

XIX.

I BELIEVE after forty Days abode on Earth, to comfort and confirm his Disciples, to give full Proof of the Resurrection of that Body that had been crucified, and to leave Orders for the Administration of his future Kingdom; that he *ascended into Heaven*, by a local Translation of himself, and abides there, highly exalted, having *all Power in Heaven and in Earth*; ever living to make *Intercession for us*.

XX.

I BELIEVE that, according to his Promise, he sent the *H O L Y G H O S T*, the third Person in the sacred Tri-

Trinity, to carry on his Designs in the World: Which *Spirit* did, in an extraordinary manner, fill and inspire the *Apostles* and *Evangelists*, that they might truly and fully make known, and deliver in Writing, the *Words* and *Works* of CHRIST, by many unquestioned *Miracles* and *Gifts*, still attesting the Truth of, and bearing witness to what they recorded.

XXI.

I BELIEVE, under the miraculous and infallible Conduct of this Teacher, and Guide, the first CHRISTIAN CHURCHES were gathered, and established by the Apostles; Forms of Worship, and Matters of Discipline completely settled, so as to leave room for no *Alterations* or *Additions*.

XXII.

I BELIEVE that BAPTISM was appointed to be the visible Way of admitting Members into the Church, and by washing with Water, *in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost*, a Person was publicly declared to be of the *Family of Christ*: And as the *Children* of Believers are capable of being taken into the same Family, I believe them also Subjects of Baptism, which is but the Sign and Seal of their

being so. For the Confirmation and Growth of those that were become Christians, the *LORD's SUPPER* was instituted, wherein by the eating and drinking of Bread and Wine, in a solemn, sacred manner, the Sufferings of Christ were commemorated, the Love of Christians enflamed, and the Practice of Christianity enforced: These are the only *SACRAMENTS* of the New Testament, and only to be administered to those that are Members of the visible Church.

XXIII.

I BELIEVE for the preaching of the Gospel, and the due Administration of these Ordinances, a *distinct Order of Men* were called and set a-part by the Apostles, who had also a Power committed to them, by the Imposition of Hands, to separate for the same work those who should be thought fit to succeed 'em, *ordaining Elders in every City*, where there was a sufficient Number to make a Church.

XXIV.

I BELIEVE that all *particular Churches* rightly so called, are Parts of the holy *Catholick Church*, of which Christ is the Head; for the sake of which the Government of the World is put into his Hands, and against which *the Gates of Hell shall never be able to prevail.*

XXV.

XXV.

I BELIEVE that to this Church shall daily, and to the End of the World, be added such as shall be sav'd. For this purpose has Christ appointed the standing Ministry of *PASTORS* and *TEACHERS*, to explain the Terms of Salvation, and persuade Men to comply therewith, building them up also in their most holy Faith.

XXVI.

I BELIEVE God is very *sincere*, and solemn in commissioning 'em to publish the *Word of Reconciliation*; by them *beseeking us, that we receive not his Grace in vain*; and that the *Condemnation* of every Sinner will for ever lie at his own Door.

XXVII.

I BELIEVE what is principally requir'd of any, to interest them in the Benefits of Redemption, is *FAITH*, without which we neither are nor can be justify'd, according to the Constitution of the Gospel; the Obedience of Christ in a way of Satisfaction and Atonement, of Merit and Procurement, being that alone which can recommend us to God.

XXVIII.

BUT I believe that *REPENTANCE* and *GOODWORKS* are also indispensably necessary to our eternal Salvation, that
with.

without *Regeneration* and *Holiness* no Man shall see the Lord.

XXIX.

I BELIEVE that our *CONVERSION* is effected, and this inherent Righteousness wrought in us by the *supernatural Operations* of the divine Spirit; not by any innate Power of our own, or the working of external means, but yet in a way accommodated to our reasonable Capacities.

XXX.

I BELIEVE all those who are so born of the Spirit are made his *TEMPLES*; that he dwells in them as an Instructor, a Comforter, as an Intercessor, and an Earnest of the promised Inheritance.

XXXI.

I BELIEVE such Persons have *Fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ*, as taking up their Habitation in and with them. That the blessed *ANGELS* are sent forth to *minister* to 'em; and that being inseparably united to one another, as Members of that Body of which Christ is the vital Head, they have *COMMUNION* with each other, both on *Earth* and in *Heaven*.

XXXII.

I BELIEVE the Existence of *SEPARATE SOULS*; their remaining active
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and intelligent while the Body sleeps in the Grave ; their going to the Places assigned for their eternal Abode immediately after their Departure hence ; and continuing in the same till the Consummation of all things at the End of the World.

XXXIII.

WHEN that time comes, I believe they shall be again united to those *BODIES* in which they lived before ; that the scattered Dust and Ashes shall be recollected, and raised to Immortality.

XXXIV.

THEN shall all the Tribes of the Earth, and all the Elect be gather'd together, from the four Winds, from one end of Heaven to the other ; and shall appear before the *TRIBUNAL* of *CHRIST*, the great Judge of Quick and Dead ; who I believe in the same Nature in which he died, rose again, and ascended on high, will come in the *Clouds of Heaven* ; attended with an innumerable Company of Angels, surrounded with awful Glory, to pass the *decisive Sentence*, and determine the everlasting State of all Men, according to the Works done in the Body.

XXXV.

I BELIEVE that the *SAINTS* shall be honourably acquitted, greatly applauded, and highly advanc'd at that Day ; that they
also

also with Christ shall judge the ungodly World ; while with a Voice more dreadful than Thunder, more piercing than sharpest Lightning, the Doom of the *Impious* and *Impenitent* shall be pronounced ; that they shall be cover'd with Shame and Confusion, filled with unspeakable Horror and Anguish, *and shall seek to fly from the Face of him that sits on the Throne.* As soon as the *Judicial Process* is concluded, Judgment shall speedily be executed.

XXXVI.

THEN I believe the *WICKED* shall be turned into *HELL*, banish'd from the Presence of the Lord, and fix'd in a State of *intollerable Pains* and Miseries, prepar'd for the Devil and his Angels ; under a Sense of which they shall always be dying in Desire, but never shall be able to die away from those Torments.

XXXVII.

FINALLY, I believe the *Righteous* shall be receiv'd into those *Mansions* prepar'd for them ; that they shall *shine as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father* ; and when all things shall be thus subdu'd, then shall the Mediator also himself be *subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all :* So shall we ever be with the Lord.

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